

I320.9
ILLI
v.34:no.3
2008:Mar.
C. 3

INSIDE: Spirit of '68 — by Kristy Kennedy
Wanna be a judge? — by Abdon Pallasch

March 2008 \$5.00

Illinois Issues

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield



Lost opportunities

**An inability to work together has stymied Democratic
attempts to create change in Springfield**

Order now!

Illinois Issues

2008 Roster of State Government Officials

**ADDRESSES • PHONE NUMBERS • FAX NUMBERS
E-MAIL ADDRESSES • WEB SITE ADDRESSES
PLUS, PHOTOS OF ALL LEGISLATORS, AND MUCH MORE!**

*The Most Useful
Illinois Directory
Published!*

This 8-1/2 x 11 slick magazine-style *Roster of State Government Officials* fits neatly into your desk drawer or filing cabinet. Completely updated for 2008, it includes listings for the governor and all other statewide constitutional officers, as well as major executive agencies and their directors. You'll find all Illinois legislators and their district addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses, and Web sites. Also includes the Illinois Supreme Court, the Illinois congressional delegation, and media/reporters who cover state government. *Plus*, hundreds of key staff members who work with these officials.

**Illinois Issues
2008 Roster
of
State
Government
Officials**

Copy this order form below:

Mail a copy of this order form to *Illinois Issues*, HRB 10, University of Illinois at Springfield, One University Plaza, Springfield, IL 62703-5407.

For more information call 217/206-6084 FAX: 217/206-7257 or E-mail illinoisissues@uis.edu

*Illinois Issues subscribers automatically get a FREE copy of the Roster.
Available in March 2008!

2008 Roster of State Government Officials

PRICE LIST:

NUMBER OF COPIES	COST PER COPY	S&H: TOTAL FOR ORDER
1-10	\$6.00	\$3.00
11-25	\$5.50	\$5.00
26-50	\$5.00	\$7.00
100	\$4.50	\$10.00
250+	\$3.50	\$20.00

Name: _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Number of copies: _____ @ \$ _____ each. Total: \$ _____

Shipping and handling: \$ _____

Total order: \$ _____

Payment by:

☐ **Check** Make checks payable to: UIS Bursar, One University Plaza
University of Illinois at Springfield, Springfield, IL 62703.

☐ **VISA** or ☐ **MasterCard**

☐ **Bill me later**

Account Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature: _____

Dana Hempel



Diversity of candidates may be behind bigger turnouts

☒ **YES!** I want to subscribe to *Illinois Issues* for one full year (10 issues in all) at the special introductory rate of just \$39.95.

My name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____

E-mail _____

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me later

To order by credit card call the *Illinois Issues* office at (217) 206-6084.

For faster service, call **1-800-508-0266**.

Visit *Illinois Issues* on web at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

Plus! FREE with your subscription one copy of the most useful Illinois directory published

2008 Roster of State Government Officials

This popular directory lists the names, addresses and phone numbers of elected and appointed officials in all three branches of government.

To order more copies of Rosters see <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu/roster/roster.html>

**Plus!
FREE
with your
subscription**



DARACK Obama. A Christian minister, Mike Huckabee. A former military officer, John McCain. During many early primaries, there was a Hispanic Democrat, Bill Richardson, and a

some notable exceptions such as Rep. Geraldine Ferraro, the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Sen. Joseph Lieberman.

In Illinois, 52.9 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in the February 5 Super Tuesday primary, according to American University's Center for the Study of the American

B308



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 1901 SPRINGFIELD, IL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

Illinois Issues

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT SPRINGFIELD

PO Box 19243

Springfield, IL 62794-9980



Dana Heupel



Diversity of candidates may be behind bigger turnouts

by Dana Heupel

Did you ever walk into a gathering — at a restaurant, maybe, or a party or a nightclub — where nobody there looked like you? Maybe their skin was a different hue. Maybe they were of the opposite gender. Perhaps they were much younger — or older.

Chances are, you became uncomfortable. You might even have left.

But if at least some faces in the crowd looked like yours, chances are you walked right in. And if they were participating in a mutual activity, you probably joined in.

I wonder if the record turnouts in this year's presidential primaries have as much to do with the diversity of the candidates as with the excitement or importance of the elections. Many more eligible voters can see someone who looks like them, and that just might make them feel more welcome in the political milieu.

There is a white woman, Hillary Clinton. An African-American man, Barack Obama. A Christian minister, Mike Huckabee. A former military officer, John McCain. During many early primaries, there was a Hispanic Democrat, Bill Richardson, and a

Many more eligible voters can see someone who looks like them, and that just might make them feel more welcome in the political milieu.

Mormon Republican, Mitt Romney.

The oldest candidate, McCain, is 71. Obama is 46, relatively young for a presidential contender.

Of course, all of them are politicians, having been elected as senators and governors. But they also represent the different faces of America. And that alone may invite more people who look like them to join the political fray.

In nearly every national election up to now, the faces of those whose names are listed on ballots have been male, white Christians, with some notable exceptions such as Rep. Geraldine Ferraro, the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Sen. Joseph Lieberman.

But this year's primary elections, for the first time, have offered voters an array of candidates who earned their spots on the ballots on their own merits, who are legitimate choices as well as standard bearers for the various ingredients in the cultural stew that has always been the staple of our nation.

Women and African Americans and Hispanics and others who have never seen national candidates who look like them now can truly believe they are part of the process, not only as supporters but as participants.

That's not to say all women support Clinton, or all African Americans will cast ballots for Obama, although both have fared strongly with those demographic groups, as has Huckabee among evangelical Christians. But if the diversity of candidates draws a greater mix of interested voters into the debate, only good things can happen.

In Illinois, 32.9 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in the February 5 Super Tuesday primary, according to American University's Center for the Study of the American

ADVISORY BOARD

CHAIR

Lawrence N. Hansen, vice president, Joyce Foundation, Chicago.

VICE CHAIR

Mike Lawrence, director, Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

MEMBERS

MarySue Barrett, president, Metropolitan Planning Council, Chicago.

Margaret Blackshire, president emeritus, Illinois AFL-CIO, Chicago.

Robert J. Christie, vice president, government relations, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Chicago.

Darcy Davidsmeyer, director, state government relations, Motorola Inc., Schaumburg.

Kathleen Dunn, vice president, government relations, Illinois Hospital Association, Springfield.

Jim Edgar, senior fellow, Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois.

Sharon Gist Gilliam, chairperson, Chicago Housing Authority.

Doris B. Holleb, professorial lecturer, University of Chicago.

Jetta Norris Jones, attorney, Chicago.

Joan W. Levy, education consultant, Northbrook.

Robert A. Lynch, deputy director, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Chicago.

Jeff Mays, president, Illinois Business Roundtable, Chicago.

Abner J. Mikva, visiting professor of law, University of Chicago.

Lawrence J. Msall, president, The Civic Federation, Chicago.

Diana Nelson, consultant, Chicago.

Dawn Clark Netsch, professor of law emeritus, Northwestern University School of Law, Chicago.

Aurie Pennick, executive director, Field Foundation of Illinois, Chicago.

Taylor Pensoncau, author and president of the board of directors, Illinois Center for the Book, Springfield.

Betsy A. Plank, principal, Betsy Plank Public Relations, Chicago.

Sylvia Puente, director, Metropolitan Chicago Initiative, Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame.

Philip J. Rock, attorney, Rock, Fusco & Associates, LLC, Chicago.

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, vice president, community and education relations, Boeing Corp., Chicago.

Tom Ryder, attorney, W. Thomas Ryder, LTD, Springfield.

Paula Wolff, senior executive, Chicago Metropolitan 2020.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Anthony P. Halter, executive director, Center for State Policy and Leadership, University of Illinois at Springfield.

Robert F. Rich, director and professor, Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois.

FOUNDING MEMBER

Samuel K. Gove, professor emeritus of political science, University of Illinois.

MEMBERS EMERITUS

(years served on board in parentheses)

Michael J. Bakalis (1983-2001), **James M. Banovetz** (1986-2005), **James L. Fletcher** (1983-2000), **David Kenney** (1978-90), **Louis H. Masotti** (1978-92), **James T. Otis** (1975-94), **David J. Paulus** (1988-94), **Carl Shier** (1978-87).

Electorate. That eclipsed the previous record of 29.7 percent, set in 1980.

Records also were set in 14 other states with primaries in both parties, according to the center: Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Utah.

Nationally, the center's analysis calculated the turnout rate for all 2008 primaries through that date at 27 percent, compared with the previous average high of 25.9 percent in 1972.

It's a shame that we consider 30 percent as a high water mark for voter turnout. The online magazine *Slate* says historical trends have shown that Americans do show up at the polls when elections are close or when important issues such as a war or the economy dominate the national consciousness, and certainly those issues are at stake now. But it's only natural to assume that voters also become more engaged when the candidates' faces in the news reports and TV ads resemble their own.

In this issue, we also look at several other forms of engagement.

Kevin McDermott, who covers Illinois government for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, writes about how the Democrats who hold the reins in the legislature and every statewide office have bungled an extremely rare opportunity to push a political agenda through the legislature because they're engaged in an increasingly vicious intra-party battle.

Kristy Kennedy revisits the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago to draw comparisons and contrasts over whether today's youth are as engaged in the debate about the Iraq War and other issues as the '60s generation was. Her findings may surprise you.

Abdon Pallasch, political reporter for the *Chicago Sun-*

Times, attends slating meetings for judicial candidates and presents the case that the jurists often are chosen more for their political connections than their legal savvy.

Our Capitol bureau chief, Bethany Jaeger, unweaves the continuing tangle that ensnarls the state's new medical malpractice laws. That knotty legal issue has now moved from the General Assembly and the governor's office to the courts.

Statehouse intern Patrick O'Brien delves into why public higher education is becoming less affordable. Much of the blame lies squarely on the shoulders of the people who make and sign laws.

In her State of the State column, Jaeger argues that the federal government should reduce the backlog in processing citizenship papers for immigrants — especially Hispanics — to help them participate in the political process.

And columnist Charles N. Wheeler III examines the Super Tuesday vote, focusing his attention on the collar counties around Chicago — traditionally a Republican stronghold but more recently home to increasing numbers of Democrats.

I also would like to welcome Janet Kerner, who is now staffing our front desk. Her friendly voice and face is the first you'll probably hear or see if you phone or visit the *Illinois Issues* office. A major part of her duties will be to maintain information about the magazine's subscriptions and circulation.

Janet holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Sangamon State University (now the University of Illinois at Springfield) and a master's in human development counseling from UIS. She was an editorial assistant at the magazine in 1995 and '96. We're happy she decided to return. □

Dana Heupel can be reached at heupel.dana@uis.edu.

Illinois Issues

ILLINOIS DOCUMENTS

MAR 05 2008

ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY
Volume XXXIV, No. 3

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

March 2008



Unsettled debate, page 24



Schools go organic, page 14



Spirit of '68, page 20

FEATURES

16 Lost opportunity

by Kevin McDermott

An inability to work together has stymied Democratic attempts to create change in Springfield.

20 Spirit of '68

by Kristy Kennedy

An earlier time sparked a different sort of student activism, but today's youth still have messages to get across.

24 Unsettled debate

by Bethany Jaeger

Doctors and lawyers wait for the Illinois Supreme Court to decide whether the state's 2005 medical malpractice reforms are constitutional.

27 Wanna be a judge?

by Abdon Pallasch

It's not always what they know that gets candidates on the ballot. Sometimes it's whom they know.

31 Cash crunch

by Patrick O'Brien

Illinois college students are caught between universities' rising costs and the state's declining funds.

Credits: The issue was designed by Diana L.C. Nelson. The photograph on our cover comes to us courtesy of Gov. Rod Blagojevich's office.

Editorial and business office: HRB 10, University of Illinois at Springfield, One University Plaza, Springfield, IL 62703-5407.

Telephone: 217-206-6084. Fax: 217-206-7257. E-mail: illinoisissues@uis.edu. E-mail editor: heupel.dana@uis.edu.

Subscription questions: Illinois Issues, Subscription Division, P.O. Box 2795, Springfield, IL 62708-2795 or call 1-800-508-0266. Hours are 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Central Time, Monday-Friday (except holidays). **Subscriptions:** \$39.95 one year/ \$72 two years/ \$105 three years; student rate is \$20 a year. Individual copy is \$5. Back issue is \$5. Illinois Issues is indexed in the PAIS Bulletin and is available electronically on our home page: <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>. Illinois Issues (ISSN 0738-9663) is published monthly, except July and August are combined. December is published online only. Periodical postage paid at Springfield, IL, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Illinois Issues, Subscription Division, P.O. Box 19243, Springfield, IL 62794-9243.

©2008 by Illinois Issues, University of Illinois at Springfield, One University Plaza, Springfield, IL 62703-5407. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without prior written permission is prohibited. Illinois Issues is published by the University of Illinois at Springfield. In addition to university support and subscription income, the magazine is supported by grants and donations. The contents of the magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the university or the donors.

DEPARTMENTS

3 EDITOR'S NOTE

Diversity may explain big turnout.
by Dana Heupel

6 STATE OF THE STATE

New citizens likely want to vote.
by Bethany Jaeger

8 BRIEFLY

34 PEOPLE

37 ENDS AND MEANS

Democratic voting is up in Illinois.
by Charles N. Wheeler III

STAFF

Director/Executive Editor, Center Publications
Dana Heupel

EDITORIAL

Statehouse Bureau Chief: Bethany Jaeger
Managing Editor: Maureen Foertsch McKinney
Projects Editor: Beverley Scobell
Columnist: Charles N. Wheeler III
Public Affairs Reporting Interu: Patrick O'Brien
Graduate Assistant: Bonnie Burcham
Editorial Assistant: Debi Edmund

BUSINESS

Business Manager: Toni L. Langdon
Marketing & Circulation Director: Linda Anderson
Circulation Fulfillment Assistant: Janet Kerner

Illinois Issues is published by Center Publications
Center for State Policy and Leadership
<http://cspl.uis.edu>

Bethany Jaeger



New Americans could become new voters if they can earn citizenship first

by Bethany Jaeger

The Latino vote in last month's primary elections emphasizes that now is the time for immigration services to be in full force.

But the naturalization process takes months, potentially preventing those who apply now from voting in the fall.

In Illinois' primary election last month, Latinos made up 17 percent of the votes cast. But there are about 1.9 million Latino residents in this state, and about 708,000 of them are eligible voters, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, a nonpartisan think tank based in Washington, D.C.

Every Latino vote, however, is politically significant. Nationally, the Latino population has supported New York Sen. Hillary Clinton over Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, a factor that could ultimately sway the tight race for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The motivations for Latinos to vote also are socially significant. They fear federal crackdowns on undocumented immigrants working in U.S. businesses. They see crimes that go unreported because they fear involving the local police, who also are trying to regulate immigration in the absence of federal reform. And, most of all, immigrants seek a voice in the debate about creating a path to citizenship for people who have lived and worked in this country for more than five years.

Meanwhile, at the state level, grass-

The effort slowed last year, however, when state money for advertising of citizenship services wasn't renewed and when a federal backlog discouraged immigrants from applying.

roots efforts continue through the so-called New Americans Initiative to help immigrants earn citizenship. The effort slowed last year, however, when state money for advertising of citizenship services wasn't renewed and when a federal backlog discouraged immigrants from applying.

The combination of state and federal changes challenged efforts by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. The Chicago-based nonprofit partners with the state to administer the New Americans Initiative to help immigrants apply for citizenship and, ultimately, to vote.

The group hopes that last year's dip in applicant numbers will rebound this spring.

So far the initiative has helped 30,000 individuals apply and 170,000 more get

information since launching in 2005, according to Luvia Quinones, the coalition's interim director of the New Americans Initiative. With state funds, the coalition distributes grants to numerous local agencies to reach all kinds of immigrants, particularly those who are the most unlikely to take the steps needed to earn citizenship. That's predominantly Hispanics, Quinones says.

Gov. Rod Blagojevich announced the New Americans Initiative in 2004 by promising \$3 million a year to help 20,000 immigrants with the naturalization exam. That funding has come through every year. And last fiscal year, the coalition received an extra \$400,000 to advertise on television and radio stations to raise awareness.

That state support combined with a national swelling of activity accomplished that goal.

"When it kicked off in 2005, it actually had a really, really high energy," Quinones says. "It continued through 2006 mainly because of the immigrant marches."

She refers to more than 100,000 people taking to the streets of Chicago last spring, gaining national attention during the federal debate over proposed immigration reforms. More immigrants rallied in central Illinois' Beardstown, which has a large Latino population because of its pork processing plant.

The heightened awareness allowed

the coalition and the agencies to reach thousands of Hispanics, in particular. While the Latino population is the fastest-growing in the country, 44 percent of them are not U.S. citizens, according to the Pew Hispanic Center. Quinones adds that Hispanics are up to three times as unlikely as Eastern European and Asian immigrants to go through the naturalization process.

She says at least 80 percent of the 30,000 immigrants who applied for citizenship through the New Americans Initiative since 2005 are Hispanics.

Summer of 2007 was a setback. A federal backlog of applications discouraged Illinois' immigrants from plugging through the process that already stretched eight months on average.

The backlog is rooted, in part, in a record number of immigrants applying through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the agency that grants or denies immigration benefits to people who want to live and work in this country. According to the agency's January testimony before a U.S. House committee, more than 3 million individuals applied or petitioned for immigration benefits last summer. That's about double the number who applied the same time one year earlier.

The fear of new federal rules, including a revamped test and higher application fees, contributed to the 2007 surge (see *Illinois Issues*, September 2007, page 19). Anticipating a fee increase from \$400 to \$675, for instance, led thousands of immigrants to file applications before the change took effect that July. Those who applied around then have waited more than a year for their applications to be processed.

At the same time in Illinois, the Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights got another round of \$3 million from the state. But its request for an extra \$500,000 for more advertising was denied.

"It's pretty damaging," Quinones says. "Due to the funding, we had to not only cut our media budget but also some of the organizations' budgets. Each of them actually saw a 6 percent cut in their grants."

The Logan Square Neighborhood Association based in Chicago is one example. The grass-roots organization serves multi-ethnic Logan Square neighborhood. It gets money from the Illinois

The state and the feds might not have a choice but to keep up with the momentum. By 2050, one in five Americans could be an immigrant if current trends continue.

coalition to run monthly workshops that help clients fill out citizenship applications. With the help of other community organizations, the association also offers volunteer legal screenings of the applications and a loan program to cover the \$675 application fee.

The cuts in grant amounts were felt by agency workers, who put in longer hours and could provide fewer resources to volunteers, says Monica Garretton, community organizer and one of the three people working on immigration in general for the Logan Square association.

"We always feel it. We're a nonprofit. It's never enough to begin with, and then when that money's cut, it's even worse. But we're committed to it. We make due."

They make due just as demand increases. They have to keep numbers up if they want to compete for state funding.

"We're kind of at the mercy of legislators in that aspect," Garretton says. "If the money's coming from the state, the legislators are the ones who decide where that goes. It's not always towards what we want."

On the other hand, legislators often support the coalition's initiatives, but they can't promise funding. That was the case with last year's We Want to Learn English program, an initiative recommended by the governor's New Americans Immigrant Policy Council and the State Interagency Task Force.

"Everyone voted for it," Garretton says of the English program. "And then nobody put any money towards it. So how are we supposed to teach English to thousands of people without any funding for it?"

When advertisements dried down and immigrants heard they'd have to pay \$675 to apply, the number of applications

processed through the New Americans Initiative dropped.

"Starting from August to the present, [the numbers] can't compare to last year," Quinones says. "They're less than half, and it's due to the fee increase."

January sparked change. Because more immigrants wanted to participate in elections and because some also adjusted to the higher fees, Quinones says 300 individuals applied in one weekend alone that month.

The state and the feds might not have a choice but to keep up with the momentum. By 2050, one in five Americans could be an immigrant if current trends continue, according to the Pew Research Center, another Washington, D.C.-based think tank of the Pew Charitable Trusts. It projects that nationwide 67 million immigrants and their 50 million children or grandchildren will contribute to a population boost through the next 40 years. Currently, one in eight Americans is an immigrant, according to the center.

Garretton says the majority of her clients, who are legal permanent residents, took steps to earn citizenship so they could have a voice in this year's elections. Others applied because they feel a backlash against immigrants of all types.

"Many of them have family members that are either undocumented, or they were once undocumented," she says. "They know what it's like. And so being able to vote and being able to have a voice and become a citizen gives them a power that lets them have a voice for those who can't have one."

They see a connection between earning citizenship and participating in the debate about creating a path for more than 12 million immigrants to do the same. And they want to exercise the power to vote for candidates who match their views on issues that resonate with most Americans — the economy and the war in Iraq.

Regardless of state or federal support, the coalition and other grass-roots organizations will continue helping more immigrants become citizens and register to vote.

"We really don't want 150,000 individuals to become citizens and not exercise their voice," Quinones says. □

Bethany Jaeger can be reached at capitolbureau@aol.com.

BRIEFLY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

South Side heron holds its ground against odds

The black-crowned night-heron is still nesting and raising its young in the wetlands near Lake Calumet in southeastern Chicago, and the resilience of this migrant bird could serve as a metaphor for the area. In 1990, its home and that of some 9,000 South Siders in the town of Burnham and the neighborhoods of Hegewisch and South Deering were slated to be “relocated” to make room for three runways of a proposed third airport (see *Illinois Issues*, December 1990, page 17).

But thanks to a people revolt, the plan was stopped, and the night-heron’s wetlands, though contaminated by years of pollution from surrounding industrial sites, remained — as did the century-old communities.

The airport is a “nonissue” in today’s political environment, says 10th Ward Ald. John Pope, a third-generation Hegewisch resident. Area leaders are concentrating on cleaning up the wetlands and attracting companies that are environmentally conscious. The short-legged heron’s image is used on company nameplates in a 3,000-acre industrial corridor as a symbol of green industry, says Pope.

The Ford Calumet Environmental Center, which is scheduled to open next year (see *Illinois Issues*, September 2006, page 15), sits at the edge of Hegewisch Marsh, a natural area being restored with federal and state grants. Almost 5,000 acres are set aside as the Calumet Open Space Reserve.

“The black-crowned night-heron is an adaptable bird,” says Jeff Levensgood, a University of Illinois professor of veterinary bioscience and a wildlife

toxicologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey. “They can nest in a variety of habitats and eat a variety of foods.”

But a new study he led found PCBs and DDE, chemicals banned in the United States in the 1970s, in the eggs of night-herons nesting around Lake Calumet. Fortunately, the chemicals do not seem to affect the birds’ reproductive success.

“We found no evidence of eggshell-thinning,” he says, referring to an effect of exposure to DDE, a metabolic by-product of DDT, a pesticide banned in 1972 that nearly wiped out the bald eagle and peregrine falcon.

The findings of the study, funded by the Chicago Department of Environment and the Illinois Waste Management and Research Center, appear in the current issue of the *Journal of Great Lakes Research*.

Photograph by Michael Jeffords, courtesy of the Illinois Natural History Survey



Black-crowned night-herons congregate near Lake Calumet.

Though the researchers found no immediate adverse effects, the night-herons are still being exposed to harmful chemicals, says Levensgood. “We can’t rest on our laurels. There is more remediation work to be done.”

Indeed, Levensgood’s study provides a baseline of data to determine progress as the wetlands are restored, says Nicole Kamins, program director for the city’s environment department. Chicago’s Calumet Ecotox Protocol, she says, is one of a handful of programs across the nation that set a framework for protecting plants and animals as the region is restored for environmental and industrial uses.

The Ford Calumet Environmental Center, Kamins says, “will be all about this coexistence of nature, industry and community.”

Beverley Scobell

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

LEGISLATIVE CHECKLIST

After an early break for the primary election last month, Illinois lawmakers returned to the Statehouse in time to hear Gov. Rod Blagojevich's annual State of the State address February 20. We went to print shortly before his speech, but we expect the governor's new initiatives and budget ideas to dominate the spring session. Expanded health care, which stalled last year along with its major funding source, is likely to top his agenda again. We will continue to follow his proposals in upcoming issues. In the meantime, here are a few examples of other measures introduced so far this spring.



Mass transit

Expect multiple attempts to change the governor's program that offers free mass transit rides to Illinois' seniors. For instance, free services could go to active duty military personnel under a measure sponsored by Democratic Rep. Daniel Burke of Chicago. Soldiers would need a valid military identification card.

A separate measure would try to scale back the plan by enacting income limits for seniors, but that same measure also would extend free rides to people with disabilities. Counties also would be responsible for detailing how they spent money raised by the regional sales tax increase in Chicago's surrounding counties, which has been touted as saving mass transit from financial ruin.

Another transit measure would require the Regional Transportation Authority to create a single card system to allow seniors who live within Chicago's suburban counties to use all transit services provided by the Chicago Transit Authority and the RTA free of charge.



Home ownership

Homeowners who are at risk of foreclosure could refinance their homes through five-year guaranteed loans, under a measure sponsored by Democratic Rep. Constance Howard of Chicago.

If the homeowner is current with payments and avoids late payments for five years, then the state's responsibility to guarantee the loan ends.

Under a separate measure, property sellers would be required to inform buyers whether the property has been involved in the manufacturing of methamphetamine, a dangerous drug. Rep. Michael Smith, a Canton Democrat, is sponsoring that measure.



Student achievers

Students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their high-school classes would be guaranteed admission to all four-year state universities under a measure sponsored by Democratic Rep. William Davis of Homewood. The schools would assess the students to determine whether any remedial classes were necessary. Several other states have similar programs.



Right to bear arms

Qualified Illinoisans would be able to carry a concealed gun under a measure sponsored by Rep. Aaron Schock, a Peoria Republican. County sheriffs would issue permits to applicants, who would be required to complete a training course in handgun use, safety and marksmanship.



Highway speed limit

Downstate lawmakers are making another attempt to raise the speed limit to 65 for trucks on highways outside urban areas. The measure is intended to help speed up interstate commerce. This time, it's sponsored by Rep. Jil Tracy, a Republican whose family owns a food delivery company based in her hometown of Mount Sterling. The measure has failed multiple times before.

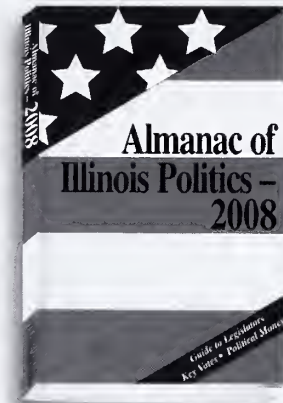


Child pornography

If an electronic and information technology equipment worker discovers child pornography while installing, repairing or servicing equipment, the worker would have to immediately report the discovery to the local police, under a measure sponsored by Rep. Jim Durkin, a Western Springs Republican.

Patrick O'Brien

Almanac of Illinois Politics - 2008



The #1 guide to Illinois government

Since its first edition in 1990, the biennial *Almanac of Illinois Politics* has been the resource for information on the key players in Illinois government.

- **Members of Congress, State Senators and State Representatives**
- **Phone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses and their Web sites**
- **Voting records** on the top issues of 2007
- **Top contributors, legislators and their opponents**

\$45⁰⁰

plus postage and handling

(\$3.00 first book, \$.50 for each additional book)

It's all in the *Almanac of Illinois Politics* — 2008.

*"I have always found the *Almanac of Illinois Politics* to be very helpful. It is the ideal informational resource on state government."*

— Frank Watson
Minority Leader, Illinois Senate

"A very worthwhile reference for everyone who needs a ready information source on state government."

— Michael J. Madigan
Speaker of the Illinois House

**To order call
(217)206-6579**

<http://cspl.uis.edu/InstituteForLegislativeStudies/>



Jessica Galli

A world-class athlete

Jessica Galli, a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, was named the 2007 Paralympian of the Year by the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Galli, who is from New Jersey, has been all over the world competing and breaking records. Last summer, she set a world record in the 400-meter race, with a time of 55.82 seconds, at the European Wheelchair Championships in Switzerland. Three weeks later in Atlanta, she broke her own record by 0.4 seconds and set two more world records, in the 200- and 800-meter races, according to the university.

In 2000, she participated in her first Paralympic Games in Sydney, Australia, and earned a silver medal in the 800-meter race. She competed at the 2004 games in Athens, Greece, and is preparing for this summer's Olympic Games in Beijing.

The first award was given in 2004, making Galli the fourth Paralympian of the Year.

Feds recast future of FutureGen

Mattoon struck gold but then lost it to the federal government's financial and political concerns. The U.S. Department of Energy pulled funding from the multibillion-dollar FutureGen project and recast it in a way that leaves Mattoon and Coles County void of the anticipated economic and environmental boon they celebrated a month before. (See *Illinois Issues*, February, page 8.)

But city, county and township officials could continue to work with Illinois' congressional delegation, state officials and the FutureGen Alliance, a group of more than a dozen energy companies, to pursue the project — even if it lacks energy department support, says Angela Griffin, president and chief executive officer of Coles Together, an economic development organization.

"I can't imagine that anybody is going to want to do business with this Department of Energy," she says. "They've misled everyone across the nation."

Department officials said in a conference call that they saw red flags as costs doubled from about \$950 million to \$1.75 billion. And within five years after President George W. Bush unveiled the original project, clean coal technology advanced. Now more than 33 commercial companies are seeking permits to operate plants similar to FutureGen's, officials said in late January.

According to Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman, the department is starting from scratch, seeking new bids, which are due this month, for new projects. It's expected to be an "all around better deal for America," for less money and less risk, he said.

The feds still aim to develop commercial clean-coal plants, but that might include multiple locations that can sequester "double the amount" of carbon dioxide emissions than what was proposed in 2003. The restructured FutureGen also would aim to generate enough electricity to power 400,000 homes, exceeding original projections.

The new plants won't run until 2015.

FutureGen Alliance chief executive officer Michael Mudd said in a statement that the plan slated for Mattoon would serve as the quickest, most comprehensive research model.

"It will take four to five years for DOE to evaluate new proposals, place contracts and conduct environmental reviews for new projects," Mudd said. "FutureGen has crossed these hurdles and is positioned for success."

Mattoon's geology would allow a commercial-scale power plant with carbon capture and sequestration. That combination would have been the first-of-its-kind research facility for generating cleaner energy and capturing harmful carbon dioxide emissions underground at the same site.

Griffin disagrees that the department's new approach will save money, when the FutureGen costs increased so much because of inflation.

"It's further deception on the public to tell people that it's in the taxpayers' best interest to stop this project and to start over," Griffin says, adding that all levels of government already invested millions of dollars, in-kind donations and "astronomical" staff time over the past five years.

Bethany Jaeger

Mold damages rare book collection

The 300,000-piece Rare Book & Manuscript Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which contains such treasures as pages of the Gutenberg Bible, has been damaged. Last fall, curators discovered that 5 percent of the collection had active mold growth. Costs of cleanup, which was expected to begin last month, could run as high as \$800,000, and the facility will have to be closed — perhaps until May.

Gems of the world-renowned collection include the papers of Carl Sandburg and H.G. Wells and first editions of several works, including those by Charles Dickens. The collection has been valued at \$1 billion but is actually priceless, says Thomas Teper, associate university librarian for collections. "The collection is irreplaceable. The university, the nation, wouldn't be able to replace it." The collection includes more than 1,000 books printed before 1501.

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

DOES THE PUBLIC NEED ANOTHER PIPELINE?

More than 540 Illinois farmers want to protect their land from a Canadian-based company planning to construct an oil pipeline through eight counties.

Enbridge Inc., with U.S. operations based in Texas, plans to extend a pipeline from Flanagan in Livingston County to Patoka in Marion County as part of a system that spans 1,900 miles in the United States. The 170 miles in Illinois would be part of an effort to make it faster and cheaper for shippers to transport crude oil through the Midwest to regional refineries.

Such Illinois refineries as CITGO Petroleum Corp. in Lemont, Conoco-Phillips' Wood River Refinery in Roxana, ExxonMobil in Joliet and Marathon Petroleum in Robinson use crude oil to produce such products as gasoline, jet fuel and feedstock. Enbridge transports crude oil to those refineries. The project that includes Illinois proposes moving 400,000 barrels of oil a day.

The company is asking for an easement so farmers can resume their farming right over the pipeline, says Denise Hamsher, Enbridge spokeswoman. In exchange,

landowners would get market value for their parcels, money for negotiating and compensation if the pipeline construction prevents them from farming again.

But if any farmer doesn't negotiate directly with the company, Enbridge is applying with the Illinois Commerce Commission to use the power of eminent domain so it can take the land to fulfill a "public need."

"We aren't proposing to take any homesteads," Hamsher says. "We would work with the landowner and site that pipeline to the maximum extent to avoid disrupting farming services or barns, and certainly try to be as far as we can from houses, recognizing that you move one way and you may be coming closer to something else."

Attorney Thomas Pliura of LeRoy, who represents more than 250 farmers before the Illinois Commerce Commission, says one of his clients claims the project comes within 30 feet of his home. Another has 10 acres affected.


Pliura says some feel that no amount of money would be worth letting go of their land.

"I'm certainly not against capitalism and entities and new business coming in, and I'm certainly not against trying to reduce our reliance on Middle East oil producers. What I am against is taking ground from Illinois farmers against their will for a foreign company to come in here and to pump foreign Canadian petroleum products through."

Enbridge says Midwest refineries need a constant supply of crude oil, but Illinois doesn't produce enough oil to meet that demand. So it has to import oil, mostly through pipelines. And Canadian oil is becoming more attractive as the American production of crude oil declines and is vulnerable to hurricanes near the Gulf, according to the company.

Completion of the Illinois arm of the new pipeline is scheduled for 2009, and the company hopes it will not need eminent domain authority, Hamsher says. The scope of the project also could grow. Enbridge is considering an extension from the Patoka hub to Texas, although nothing was final by February.

Bethany Jaeger



When you need to
know anything about
agricultural issues,
turn to Illinois Farm Bureau.

www.ilfb.org

Let IFB be your expert
resource to the
world of agriculture.

**ILLINOIS
FARM
BUREAU®**
*The state's largest
farm organization
serving farmers since 1916.*

INPR4008GS1106

Association mandates drug testing in high-school championships

High-school athletes will be tested for such performance-enhancing drugs as steroids before they compete in state playoffs later this year.

The Illinois High School Association will begin random drug tests before state championship series following the regular season. Though the association won't mandate drug tests during the regular season, a few schools already test for steroids and other drugs that could help illegally boost an athlete's performance.

There was no uniform testing policy when the association surveyed its members in December, and 72 percent of the members responding approved the new testing rules. The group represents 765 high schools across the state.

According to the association, New Jersey and Florida are the only states with mandatory testing programs. Illinois is the first to voluntarily institute a program without legislative involvement.

Only teams that qualify for championship series would be subject to the drug tests. Details of how the program would operate are still being worked out.

Ken Leonard, varsity football coach at Sacred Heart-Griffin High School in Springfield, says football players there have been tested since 2004, both randomly throughout the season and during the rest of the year. "We test every kid," he says.

He calls the statewide testing program a good step toward shielding young people from the harsh effects of steroids and other drugs. "If we can help one kid, it's worth it."

Marty Hickman, executive director of the state high school association, says "conservative" estimates put the rate of use for anabolic steroids, amphetamines and other drugs at 3 percent to 4 percent among high-school athletes. He says steroids are the most commonly abused performance-enhancing drug at the high-school level and are the target of the testing program.

The program will cost the association up to \$150,000 in the first year, according to Hickman. Expanding the program to test throughout the regular season depends on the results of the initial testing program.

Patrick O'Brien

Drawing courtesy of the Korean War National Museum



Stage is set for Korean War museum

Organizers of a national Korean War museum want to begin construction in Springfield later this year.

"In the 1990s, Korean War veterans started to realize they had really accomplished something in Korea," says Larry Sassorossi, executive director of the project, who cites such later events as the fall of the Berlin Wall as increasing awareness. "At first, it wasn't even called a war; it was called a police action, and the VFW didn't accept them, and the American Legion didn't have anything to do with them."

Astronaut Buzz Aldrin, a combat pilot whom Sassorossi called "a true Korean War hero," wrote: "The Korean War has been called 'The Forgotten War.' But the fact is, Korea was one of the coldest, bloodiest wars in world history. Over 36,000 Americans lost their lives in Korea, while another 103,000 were wounded."

In the mid-1990s a group of southern Illinois veterans sparked the idea for a museum to commemorate the 1950-53 war. Original plans called for a museum to be built in east central Illinois in Tuscola and later in Rantoul.

But Sassorossi, who was brought on board to the project in 1999, says that a 2004 fundraising campaign based on letters from veterans such as Aldrin and actor James Garner stimulated greater interest than had been anticipated. Groups such as the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau, the local chamber of commerce and the economic development arm of the city encouraged veterans to build the museum in Springfield. They selected a site near the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

"We're pretty excited about it," says Tim Farley, director of the visitor's bureau. "I think it's going to be phenomenal."

The Korean War National Museum moved closer to fruition in 2007, when organizers bought a \$600,000 downtown Springfield site near the Lincoln museum. Plans now call for an \$18.5 million Korean War museum with \$6 million dollars of interactive exhibits.

Sassorossi says groundbreaking is expected later this year. To start construction, organizers need to raise \$1 million and collect an additional \$200,000 in pledges.

Meanwhile, plans call for the archives now housed in Rantoul to be moved to a vacant Osco Drug store in downtown Springfield.

The two-phase construction project calls for a 10,000-square-foot building and then a 45,000-square-foot exhibition area. In addition to items such as photographs, weaponry and vehicles, Sassorossi says, the museum is expected to incorporate interactive exhibits that would allow visitors to get a sense of soldiers' experiences.

Victoria Clemons, director of Downtown Springfield Inc., says she believes the addition of the museum would be a plus to the community. "I think anything that brings a different demographic to the downtown area is certainly advantageous."

She notes that veterans and family members do not see Korea "as the forgotten war," as it is sometimes called. "They make it their passion."

At least 2 million veterans survive.

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

Rural health connections

Patients in rural Illinois will soon be able to be seen by doctors and specialists even if they're hours apart, thanks to high-speed Internet connections linking small-town hospitals to resources across the state and the nation.

Through a \$21 million grant, the Illinois Rural HealthNet will use a fiber optic and wireless network to connect rural hospitals with specialists at larger facilities. When the project is completed in 2010, doctors in 88 locations, from Metropolis to Paris to Galena, will be able to access specialty care unavailable in their areas.

Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn, chairman of the Governor's Rural Affairs Council and chairman of Illinois' Broadband Deployment Council, says the project is critical to downstate residents. "Improving and expanding access to high-speed networks is crucial to the development of new treatments for citizens in sparsely populated areas of our state," he said in a letter to the Federal Communications Commission.

The commission administers a Rural Health Care Pilot Program, providing more

than \$400 million to 42 states to improve rural health care.

The Illinois Rural HealthNet project was spearheaded by Northern Illinois University in DeKalb and other medical centers and hospitals statewide, including Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield and Carbondale.

The "lightning quick" network allows doctors to monitor at-risk patients in their homes and talk with patients using digital cameras and screens. Medical records can be transmitted in seconds, and such large files as MRI images and CT scans can be shared within minutes.

Roger Holloway, president of the Illinois Rural Health Association, says the network will help patients and potentially save lives. "A patient shows up at 2 in the morning in Metropolis with a head injury from a car accident. That patient needs to see a neurologist. It's going to be much easier to get the X-rays and other information to the specialist on the other end where the patient will be transferred to."

Holloway also says the project will particularly help patients with mental health

needs. "We don't have anywhere enough access to psychiatrists in southern Illinois."

The speed of the network will allow psychiatrists and their patients to talk "just as if you're sitting in the room with the patient," he says.

Psychiatrists also can be included in treatment of patients in emergency rooms or prisons without being there.

The network could expand to individual doctors' offices and community health departments in the future.

Quinn says the program will bring equality in health care to every corner of the state: "Every person in the Land of Lincoln deserves access to first-class health care, and this program will greatly improve the medical landscape in Illinois. I look forward to the day when families across our state can enjoy 21st century solutions to all of their medical challenges."

The final planning steps for the project are being finished now, and Holloway says work on the network will begin later this year.

Patrick O'Brien

Illinois Issues A Magazine on a Mission!



What's our mission?

To provide fresh, provocative analysis of public policy in Illinois, specifically focusing on state government and politics

Are we successful? Ask our readers:

"I really like everything about the publication – the feature stories, photos, statistics. It allows me to become educated on a huge variety of topics I wouldn't normally seek out."

"Illinois Issues should be required reading in ALL state agencies!!"

(Comments from 2006 Readership Survey)

Do you believe in this mission?

ENGAGE in public policy discourse in Illinois by subscribing to *Illinois Issues*, the state's leading public affairs magazine since 1975.

Association, Corporation and Government Partnerships and/or bulk subscription rates are now available.

Contact *Illinois Issues* at 217-206-6094 or <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

Schools go organic

Photographs courtesy of Greg Christian, the Organic School Project



Chef Greg Christian prepares organic meals for students.



Students at Louisa May Alcott School eat organic lunches.

Several years ago, chef Greg Christian was at a loss for how to help his young daughter Britha. Not only was the child severely asthmatic, but she seemed to be allergic to nearly 80 percent of all foods. When traditional Western medicines didn't seem to help, the family turned to alternative therapies and also switched to an organic diet.

With that, Christian says, Britha's health began to improve. And while that spelled relief and joy for him as a father, it also caused some degree of soul-searching for him professionally.

"I couldn't look at my business the same way," he says of his Chicago catering company.

He started incorporating more organic and locally grown foods into his business.

Then, he began looking for ways to bring those foods, and better nutrition, into classrooms. He wanted to teach not only fundamentals about healthy eating, but also to help students feel connected to their food.

Christian formed the nonprofit Organic School Project, funded largely by his catering work. His ultimate goal: establish school gardens where students can grow food and then use it to create meals in the school's cafeteria. Waste materials from meals would be recycled or composted and returned to the garden.

Christian took his ideas to the Chicago

Public Schools — a formidable notion, given that there are more than 600 schools in the system and nearly 300,000 lunches served daily — and eventually was given the nod to establish pilot projects in three schools. And while food safety regulations prevent such things as using food from a school-tended garden in school cafeterias, says Chicago schools' logistics officer Louise Esaian, Christian was able to begin some interesting projects.

Besides helping to set up gardens at three Chicago public schools — Louisa May Alcott in Lincoln Park, McCorkle in Little Village and Hammond Elementary on the city's South Side — the Organic School Project for months last year was preparing and serving organic lunches at Alcott, bringing in food as a subcontractor and easing into organic meals. They started with the familiar — cheese pizza — Christian says, and then moved on to introduce other items. The project also provides after-school snacks and food lessons at Lowell Elementary.

Josephine Lauer Washuk, director of logistics for the project, says the approach is three-pronged: grow, teach, feed. "Just providing wholesome foods isn't going to make kids start eating healthy," she said. "We're trying to educate them in a holistic way so that they want to eat healthy."

But with the start of the new school

year, Christian says, the Organic School Project no longer had a place at Alcott's cooking counter, so to speak. He says that when the school's cafeteria manager retired, so did the district's enthusiasm for the Organic School Project's presence. Esaian says the district wants to more thoroughly evaluate the program, and that Christian himself decided to leave the school. She says his commitment to providing organic foods was clear, in that he subsidized the cost of stocking Alcott's pantry with such items.

As Christian's goals become more well-known, he might be better able to meet funding challenges. Late last year, the Organic School Project was selected to receive a grant from Chipotle restaurants. Scott Robinson, who oversees local Chipotle store marketing for the Chicagoland region, says the project's goals were a "perfect match" for the McDonald's-owned chain, which uses fresh foods and recycled materials when possible. Chipotle donated a portion of one day's sales from 55 stores to the Organic School Project, which amounted to \$15,000.

"Normally, when I'm trying to raise money, I have to explain to people what I'm doing," Christian says. "In this case, they came to me. They understood exactly where we were coming from."

*Jennifer Halperin
Oak Park*

NIU goes to Mexico

Northern Illinois University is leading a project funded by the National Science Foundation to motivate Hispanic students toward careers in math and science. In the next five years, the university will send 45 high-school and middle-school science teachers to Mexico to increase cultural understanding between teachers and students of Mexican heritage, as well as foster student interest in science.

"The objective of the NSF program is to encourage more of all minority students to seek careers in science. The program arises because of the low percentage of minority representation, especially Hispanics, in the sciences," says Eugene Perry, professor of geology and environmental geosciences at NIU, who spearheads the project with Kathleen Kitts, assistant professor in the department.

When a teacher can use geological examples that are relevant to the students, Kitts says, it makes them more interested in learning the material.

"[A] lot of these students come from the central Mexico region. They have family there, they visit there, and you have [Mount Popocatepetl], which is a real threat. You can see this thing belching smoke. You get up in the morning, you look out and you see it. When you give that example, and the students can say, 'My grandmother lives there' or 'I've actually been there,' it takes on a whole new meaning," says Kitts.

One of the project goals is to give teachers who are struggling to communicate with their Hispanic students new tools to reach them. The teachers visit archaeological and anthropological sites, as well as examine geology and modern culture. The instructors also get a chance to talk to and learn from their Mexican counterparts.

A 2006 pilot trip taught the U.S. teachers that they shared common ground with the Mexican teachers. Students who speak English as a second language in the United States pose a challenge to instructors here, says Kitts, and students who speak Spanish as a second language challenge Mexican teachers. The teachers from both countries connected and began sharing methods to deal with obstacles and find new ways to overcome the challenges of communication.

Teachers who qualify for the trips will take digital cameras and create a virtual field trip they will share with their students, colleagues and at conferences. The instructors also are allowed to bring rock samples home with them to use as hands-on lessons.

Bonnie Burcham

Equal pay victory

A Chicago woman claimed the first court victory under the state's Equal Pay Act in January. She recovered more than \$12,000 in lost wages and penalties from her former employer, Main Street Liquors in Chicago.

The Cook County Circuit Court decision ruled that Mary A., who requested that her full name be withheld from public record, should receive more than \$4,000 in back pay and more than \$8,000 in penalties from the business. The woman filed a complaint with the Illinois Department of Labor after learning that she was paid less than a male co-worker for essentially the same job.

The law, signed by Gov. Rod Blagojevich in 2004, says that if two workers perform substantially the same job tasks under the same work conditions, it's illegal for one to be paid more than the other. Employers can't be charged with breaking the law if a higher wage is paid to another gender based on job seniority or merit.

"I'm glad that I knew about it early on," she said in a news release issued by the governor's office. "I advise anyone who needs help getting wages owed to them to go to the Illinois Department of Labor because they can help."

The business owner was fined the maximum amount under the law for not complying with the board's original order to pay the back wages, necessitating a court ruling. "The employer simply refused to comply with the law, and that's why additional penalties were paid," says Anjali Julka, labor department spokeswoman.

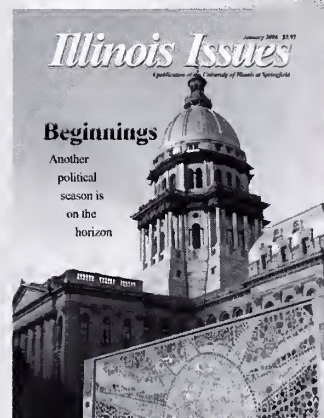
The law applies to any company with more than four employees, including local government units and school districts.

Patrick O'Brien

Each month, thousands of the most highly informed and influential individuals in Illinois turn to *Illinois Issues* for detailed, factual analysis of the issues, events and personalities shaping the future of our state.

Advertising in *Illinois Issues* is one of the most effective and economical ways to get your message before Illinois decision-makers and opinion-shapers.

Advertise here!



Illinois Issues

Call Linda Anderson at
(217)206-6094

Lost opportunities

An inability to work together has stymied Democratic attempts to create change in Springfield

by Kevin McDermott

On January 8, 2007, Gov. Rod Blagojevich stood in a packed Springfield convention center before a frenzied crowd of supporters celebrating his

second inaugural and surveyed what must have looked like a cloudless political horizon.

Two months earlier, he had won his

second term as governor, something no Democrat had done in Illinois in more than 40 years. It seemed the voters had not only validated the activist-progressive

Photograph courtesy of the office of the governor



House Speaker Michael Madigan and Sen. President Emil Jones Jr. stand behind the governor as he gives his 2006 address.

policies of his first term but also had given him the tools to expand upon them: His party had come out of the election holding every lever of state governmental power (all six statewide offices, plus widened majorities in both chambers of the General Assembly) for the first time since before World War II.

"I read the election as a mandate for action," Blagojevich said in an 18-minute inauguration speech centered on an ambitious plan to create a universal health care system in Illinois that would inspire the nation. "I intend to act."

The ensuing year saw action, all right, but certainly not the kind Blagojevich had predicted. Long-cherished Democratic goals that in theory should have been easily realized now — fundamental school funding reform, new infrastructure and his own universal health care initiative — became bogged down in the worst intraparty political war in modern memory.

Stress lines that had long been growing between top Democrats broke wide open in 2007, as Blagojevich's emboldened second-term policy ambitions collided with the desire of others in his party to put on the brakes. He dragged lawmakers back to Springfield in special sessions again and again in failed attempts to force his legislative agenda into law. For much of the year, he and his all-Democratic power structure couldn't even come together on a new state budget, let alone usher in the "activist government" that Blagojevich had promised. All indications are that this year will see more of the same.

"You've been in charge since 2003. You run everything in this state — you love to tell us that," House Minority Leader Tom Cross, an Oswego Republican, pointed out during a gloating floor speech in January, after listening to one frustrated Democratic lawmaker after another excoriate Blagojevich. "[But] when you look at your track record since 2003, there's not a lot to brag about. Those of you that run this state, you're running it into the ground."

How Illinois' Democratic juggernaut went from irresistible force to immovable object is a story that's partly about individual personalities — particularly those of Blagojevich, who after five years as governor still plays the role

of brash young outsider, and his chief nemesis, Rep. Michael Madigan of Chicago, the longtime House speaker and chairman of the state Democratic Party. Their ongoing blood feud is arguably the wrench that stopped everything.

As Kent Redfield, a political scientist at the University of Illinois at Springfield, puts it: "One is used to running the state, and the other would like to."

But it's also a story about the personality of a party. It could be that in the end, Democrats in the state simply aren't well-suited to the kind of power they found themselves holding in January 2007. "The Illinois Democratic Party traditionally has always been very pragmatic. ... There's not what you'd call a 'Democratic vision,'" Redfield says.

Blagojevich has long maintained that the heart of the conflict has been the resistance of old-guard party leaders to the Democratic vision of universal health care and other sweeping goals he's pursued.

"I have fewer friends today than I had three years ago because you're going to ruffle feathers," Blagojevich said in a March 2006 interview with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. "You're going to upset some interests that kind of expected that there was a certain way of doing things. We've basically said, 'We're going to change those things.'"

Others say the problem isn't noble ends but unreasonable means. They point to Blagojevich's penchant for unilaterally unveiling major new policy initiatives, with little warning even to lawmakers of his own party, and then vilifying anyone who questions the cost or viability of his plans.

"If he would only turn around and work with us, we could actually make him a good governor," Rep. Lou Lang, a Skokie Democrat, said in an angry House floor speech in January, during the latest of many policy showdowns with Blagojevich. "But he has been unwilling to do that."

In 1995 and 1996, when the GOP briefly held both the governor's office and legislative majorities in the House and Senate, unified Republicans came in with an ideologically driven to-do list and quickly proceeded to do it. Tax caps,

Stress lines that had long been growing between top Democrats broke wide open in 2007, as Blagojevich's emboldened second-term policy ambitions collided with the desire of others in his party to put on the brakes.

Blagojevich, already predisposed to view himself as a populist crusader fighting an entrenched political system, had been given what he considered a mandate to press that crusade.

welfare reform and other longstanding Republican goals were rammed into law, one after another, as Democrats watched helplessly.

After all the legislative tire-spinning of 2007, it's easy to forget that Democrats did have their own successful agenda-ramming period, shortly after Blagojevich began his first term in 2003. Despite the immediately obvious conflicts between the brash young Democratic governor and the old-guard Democrats who ran the General Assembly, they managed to come together enough in those first few years to hike the state's minimum wage, increase education funding and institute a major new children's health care program.

"You elected me four years ago to change things and focus our state government on the needs of people," Blagojevich boasted to supporters during his second inaugural speech at Springfield's Prairie Capital Convention Center. "We got things done."

But having approved the minimum-wage hike and other policies on which Democrats generally agreed, the party continued to control the levers of government with little consensus on how to use them.

That problem, Redfield argues, is a peculiarly Democratic one.

"If you contrast it to how the Republicans went about it in '95, '96, there was at least an attempt to have a common agenda," Redfield says. It may be an intrinsically easier thing for Republicans to maintain that kind of intraparty consensus, he says, because GOP wish lists in Illinois tend to be ideological rather than financial. "Republicans tend not to want to spend money."

Blagojevich, on the other hand, proposed a massive new \$2.1 billion universal health care initiative, to be funded by a major new tax on the gross receipts of businesses. Among opponents was Madigan, who had already signaled that his focus in 2007 would be on getting the state's finances in order. And Democratic Senate President Emil Jones Jr. of Chicago turned his attention to yet a third conflicting goal: education finance reform.

In a normal year, the impasse might be expected to lead to negotiation,

compromise and — eventually — agreements that no one loved but everyone could live with.

But 2007 wasn't a normal year. Blagojevich, already predisposed to view himself as a populist crusader fighting an entrenched political system, had been given what he considered a mandate to press that crusade. "I don't believe you re-elected me to reverse course," he said in his second inaugural speech.

The divergence of policy goals quickly degenerated into a highly personal and bitter political war, with Blagojevich and Madigan at its center. It engulfed not just the health care debate but virtually everything else in Springfield, including the nuts-and-bolts necessity of putting together a new state budget.

There are, of course, at least two sides to every argument. But it's striking how many people involved in the various legislative debacles of the past year — from both parties and varied ideologies, backgrounds and alliances — place most of the blame squarely on Blagojevich.

The now-familiar complaints include allegations that the governor harbors an end-justifies-the-means attitude about policy, open scorn for the give-and-take of the legislative process and a refusal to bargain in good faith — or often, to bargain at all.

"He thinks we ought to simply rubber-stamp his proposals and not ask all these pesky questions," says Rep. Gary Hannig, a Litchfield Democrat and Madigan's top budget negotiator.

Redfield, like others who have watched the meltdown from the outside, gives Blagojevich credit for having a broader vision of government than many in Springfield but faults him for failing to unify his party around that vision.

"It's a huge failure of leadership on the governor's part," Redfield says. He also cites the governor's "inability to make some realistic accommodations" to others on his often-ambitious policy objectives.

Many of the governor's fellow Democratic politicians are even blunter. "[He's like] a 3-year-old who is just covered in chocolate ... running free in a linen store," Rep. Jack Franks of Woodstock said in a January floor speech,

“putting his hands on everything, just making the biggest mess that he possibly could and then leaving it for us to clean up.”

Franks was referring to Blagojevich’s handling of this year’s mass transit crisis, but critics say the charge could just as easily apply to last year’s health care showdown. Blagojevich began lobbying the public on his ambitious plan without laying any groundwork among legislative leaders. He offered a funding mechanism that many considered unrealistic and devastating to business. He publicly vilified those who raised concerns.

During a May hearing on the issue before the full House, he presented his plan not as an option but an ultimatum, threatening deep cuts to other areas if it wasn’t approved. “A do-nothing budget means pain to your constituents,” Blagojevich warned.

Madigan, in typical fashion, responded with quiet but deadly parliamentary maneuvers. Perhaps the most ironic moment to date in the Democrats’ reign came on May 10, when Madigan — one of the ruling party’s most partisan leaders — ushered in an almost unprecedented show of bipartisanship by engineering a humiliating 107-0 House vote against Blagojevich’s gross-receipts business tax plan, effectively killing the universal health care initiative.

From there, the poison flowed freely in both directions. Budget negotiations broke down, and all sides burrowed into their foxholes. Blagojevich repeatedly issued orders for lawmakers to return to Springfield in special sessions, some clearly timed for maximum inconvenience. Madigan began ignoring the orders. Blagojevich sued Madigan on constitutional grounds.

The legislature, facing an imminent shutdown of government, finally passed a budget over Blagojevich’s objections. Blagojevich subsequently used his amendatory veto to trim millions of dollars of what he called legislative “pork” from the budget bill, but in a manner clearly meant to punish House Democrats and Senate Republicans who had stood against him.

By the end of the calendar year, the all-powerful Democratic majority had

barely managed to complete the routine work of government, let alone anything transformative. Education funding was finally increased but not overhauled. There is still no new statewide infrastructure program, despite vast consensus in both parties that it’s needed. Where the state’s fiscal picture stands depends on whom you talk to, but few are willing to declare it healthy.

Blagojevich, unable to win the universal health care program he wanted, did finally press into law a much more modest health care expansion initiative, using his amendatory veto powers. More than one critic has noted that it’s roughly what he might have ended up with — but with far less political bloodletting — had he been willing to negotiate with lawmakers on the issue in the first place.

“I don’t begrudge him for thinking big. But when it became clear that he didn’t have the votes ... a better way of looking at it would have been, ‘What is possible?’” says Hannig. “We perhaps could have gotten where he is anyway.”

The impasse is especially frustrating for Democratic leaders who were active during the 1990s, when Republicans held much of the power in Springfield and Democrats had to fight for every inch of policy they could get. To watch now as an unfettered Democratic majority trips over its own feet is beyond frustrating to some.

“This is calamitous in terms of what might have been done,” says Dawn Clark Netsch, the former legislator, state comptroller and 1994 Democratic gubernatorial nominee.

She laments especially the lack of consensus on restructuring the way education is funded, a long-sought goal of progressives in both parties that had always been stymied in the past by anti-tax conservative Republicans. Major education funding reform, Netsch says, “wasn’t going to be easy in any case, but it should have been possible, with all the offices being held by Democrats.”

Netsch, who teaches law at Northwestern University and is still active in Democratic politics, said some people have suggested that she should make specific recommendations to both sides for settling the continuing policy disputes in Springfield. But the problem,

she says, is that the conflict, at its base, isn’t about policy.

“It’s become so personal. It’s this ego clash taking place,” Netsch says. “This advice is not likely to be taken, but these people have got to back off from their dug-in positions. ... There’s no end in sight at the moment.”

There’s been little indication in 2008 that ruling Democrats will yet put aside their differences and reshape Illinois in their party’s image.

In the first legislative test of the year, Chicago’s public transit system in January came within days of a fiscal meltdown as Blagojevich and the legislature argued over how to fix it. In the end, the solution — a regional tax increase — came with yet another Blagojevich amendatory veto to force yet another major initiative on lawmakers — free public transportation for seniors.

The response among House Democrats has been a proposed constitutional initiative to do away with the governor’s amendatory veto powers. “If the governor’s unable to [responsibly] play with his toys, we’re going to take his toys away from him,” Rep. John Fritchey, a Chicago Democrat, fumed on the House floor as he announced the measure.

Of course, the public generally doesn’t pay much attention to internal political squabbling, but it’s clear that the events and nonevents in Springfield in the past year have crossed that threshold. A poll published in January by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* found that the Democratic governor of this heavily Democratic state has a dismal 42 percent approval rating, and the Democrat-controlled legislature has an even worse 37 percent.

In hindsight, the words of Senate Republican Leader Frank Watson of Greenville, spoken shortly after the Democrats swamped his party in the November 2006 elections, seem prescient:

“[Democrats] certainly did well in this election, but they have to be careful. Democrats are known to do things that could swing the pendulum back the other way. Sometimes, they don’t seem to be able to help themselves.” □

Kevin McDermott is Springfield bureau chief for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Spirit of '68

An earlier time sparked a different sort of student activism,
but today's youth still have messages to get across

by Kristy Kennedy

Photograph courtesy of Bernie Kleina



Demonstrators gather at the site of the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

The priest climbed on top of a small building in Chicago's Grant Park, hoping to get a better photograph of a crowd of demonstrators.

No, not "demonstrators." That word didn't really seem to fit. Mostly, it was a crowd of young people just listening to a bunch of speakers. Thousands had gathered for the only day permitted to stage protests during the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

Looking through the viewfinder, the Rev. Bernie Kleina noticed a group of police in their baby blue helmets forming a wedge shape with their bodies. He snapped a picture. And then another, as the wedge's point began to shatter the crowd. A military tactic, the flying wedge formation was effective at crowd control. Kleina continued to shoot pictures as people left Grant Park. On side streets, his film captured gas-mask-wearing

National Guard members holding rifles outfitted with bayonets. It was like a war zone, Kleina thought as he made his way home.

But Jane Adams was there to stay. A secretary of the Students for a Democratic Society, or SDS, she had come to Chicago as a marshal to try to maintain a degree of control during the demonstrations. An experienced protester, Adams took garbage and other objects away from

young people who taunted police. She then linked arms with other marshals to form a barrier between them and the blue helmets.

As the crowd dispersed, Adams walked past the blocked streets and made her way to Michigan Avenue, a long way from her hometown of Ava in southern Illinois. The armed guardsmen were a little unsettling, but Adams had a purpose — to prevent any trouble from happening and to document it if it did. She found herself in front of the Hilton, the headquarters for Eugene McCarthy. Looking up, she could see a crowd of young people inside the hotel looking down from glass windows and a similarly dressed group standing outside. They were part of the “Clean for Gene” contingent: well-dressed, coiffed and clean-shaven young people for peace.

“Just as the police started clearing us away, all the Clean for Gene kids decided to have a sit-in. We’re telling them to get up. The folks in the suite were leaning in and looking down, and then the cops started wailing on these kids. There was blood everywhere,” Adams says. “Everybody knew they shouldn’t be sitting down.”

Some were shoved through a plate-glass window. She watched as a taxi picked up a bloodied young couple in a suit and dress. It sped away. For years, Adams would have nightmares about baby blue helmets and flying wedges. The youth in the windows weren’t the only people watching the brutality. Television cameras caught the action, with young people chanting, “The whole world is watching.” It was a defining moment in a year of defining moments taking place in the heart of America. Tom Hayden — one of seven people indicted over the violence in Chicago — later called it the “crest of a wave.” This year, the 40th anniversary of that tumultuous time, has brought with it the time and distance for reflection and an opportunity to look at the future.

“The ’60s resurgence is because of the similarity between Iraq and Vietnam, the generational identities of the presidential candidates and the 40th and 50th anniversaries of everything right around the corner,” says Hayden, an author, activist and former California state senator.

Although the times aren’t as turbulent

today, America appears to be at a turning point, just as it did 40 years ago. Presidential candidates from both parties use the word “change” as a mantra. Americans are concerned about Iraq and the economy. And just as they were in the ’60s, young people today are trying to find their place in the world.

“Because there is no draft, students can’t be expected to lead the anti-Iraq movement today, but they do represent at least half the people who go to demonstrations,” Hayden says. They might not be marching in mass demonstrations, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t active. Youth today are volunteering in record numbers (in part thanks to high-school requirements and college admission standards); SDS reformed recently after disbanding in 1969; and young people are using technology to protest.

Many saw Hayden as the voice of his generation. As a founding member of SDS and author of the *Port Huron Statement*, he defined the views of young people nationwide and gave them a mission to follow.

“We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit.” No more draft. No more war. Love. Peace. Equality. Those were the battle cries that reflected the struggles of the day. The fight for African Americans to sit in the front of the bus, to make homes in any neighborhood they chose and for their children to go to the same schools as white children. The fight for women to have access to the same jobs and salaries as men. And the fight for 18-year-olds to vote for or against the leaders who drafted them into the war. Different groups of people were struggling for the fundamental rights and freedoms offered by America.

That internal struggle of rights made it a unique time, says historian David Farber, who teaches at Temple University and wrote *Chicago ’68*. “The 1960s were a time of explosive experimentation in political practice,” he says. “It was extraordinary.” There were hippies and yippies and disenchanted students in the thick of it all. Opposition to the Vietnam War — and more specifically to the draft — would bring them together.

Nancy Deenan was a college junior in 1968, when she marched against Vietnam

“The 1960s should not be a marker that everything else falls short of. Americans have always been very inventive about practicing our democracy.”

in Washington, D.C. She had two brothers back in Wilmette and a boyfriend who would be eligible for the draft. “We knew people being sent to Vietnam,” Deenan says. “It affected everyone’s family and romantic life.” Not too long ago, Deenan marched against the Iraq war. Her first thought was, “Where are all the students?” It’s a common question for those like Deenan and Kleina whose lives were shaped by the ’60s.

They would be wrong to think that young people aren’t protesting. It just looks different, says Farber, who sees ingenuity. “The 1960s should not be a marker that everything else falls short of. Americans have always been very inventive about practicing our democracy. I don’t see failure.”

For instance, students in the University of Chicago’s ACLU chapter decided to go a step beyond the traditional petition drive. Rather than only collect signatures against wiretapping legislation before Congress, the group gave cell phones to students to call congressional offices on the spot. “We figure a call is a hundred times more effective than sending out a piece of paper with names on it,” says Jim Murphy, co-executive director of the group.

Technology was key for young members of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, who created videos for YouTube to advance causes such as allowing illegal immigrants who have graduated from American high schools to go to college in the states. Youth

With the internal issues of the '60s largely settled and information instantly at their fingertips, young people today have the luxury to take a broader view of the world. Popular causes include Darfur and the environment.

are crucial for the immigrant activist movement because they generally have a better grasp of English and can translate for their elders, says Juan Jose Gonzalez, youth organizer for the ICIRR. "For the immigrant rights movement, the youth represent the next generation."

Just as they were in the '60s, young people today are moved to act when issues directly affect them. That is perhaps most clear to members of the ICIRR who can be separated from friends and family by immigration laws and policies, Gonzalez says.

Four decades ago, surprise and outrage spurred Kleina to action. Sheltered while growing up in a white neighborhood and white Catholic schools, he had little contact with racial discrimination.

At 27, he was so moved by images on his television that he packed up and went to Selma, Ala., for a week in 1965. In his black suit and white collar, the Rev. Kleina nodded in disbelief and disgust in a photograph on the front page of *The Selma Times-Journal*. He stood with folded arms and a tight-lipped smile while being chastised for walking through a white neighborhood with a mixed-race group of five. He was arrested for parading without a permit.

It was a life-changing experience. Returning to his Elmhurst parish, Kleina shared his passion to make a difference, often through homilies that were not always welcome. Kleina continued his work, walking and snapping pictures of the freedom marches in Chicago and

later protesting Vietnam.

The assassinations of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and U.S. Sen. Robert Kennedy in 1968 were devastating but left Kleina with the strong feeling that there was more work to do. He left the priesthood for other reasons but has made his life's work running the Wheaton-based HOPE Fair Housing Center, which fights housing discrimination nationwide. Today, Kleina wonders why the Iraq war doesn't stir more people to action. "I think too many people are content with life," he says. "Where have all the people gone who were against the war in the 1960s, and where are their children?"

With the internal issues of the '60s largely settled and information instantly at their fingertips, young people today have the luxury to take a broader view of the world. Popular causes include Darfur and the environment. "What you see now are young people and others struggling with issues related to international globalization," Farber says. "What do we do about catastrophic failings outside our own borders? A lot of people are trying to figure out our new global economic system and how do they find their place in it, especially young people."

An old-school sit-in seemed to be the perfect form of protest for Matt Heffernan Jr., who was frustrated about the Iraq War. Military recruiters often visit Morton West High School in Berwyn, where Heffernan is a junior. "I explained the idea of a sit-in to my friends, and they agreed it would be a good thing and might change something," he says.

Details spread by word of mouth through leaders of various cliques. Cafeteria, after third period, All Saints Day for peace. Two teens brought guitars, and about 70 kids showed up for what was supposed to be an afternoon of reflection. "We wanted them to see that the war affects us every day. But really, we were just trying to send a message out that peace is possible," Heffernan says. A few songs were sung, and in Heffernan's mind, everything was going well until the police showed and school administrators started hinting that arrests were possible. Much of the group returned to class.

Heffernan and two dozen other students stuck it out, only to face

suspension and possible expulsion for disrupting school. To his surprise, support started rolling in. Heffernan held a news conference with the Rev. Jesse Jackson. SDS started a petition drive on his behalf. The teen was interviewed by many newspapers, even *The New York Times*. "Things started changing for me in a way that wouldn't have happened," he says. "I've always wanted to be active and to do something. This is just the first step." Now, Heffernan is trying to get an SDS chapter started at his school. He has 100 signatures and is looking for a teacher to sponsor the group.

Meanwhile, Peter Luckow sees the world as a place he can get his arms around and fix. The Northwestern University junior feels he makes the biggest difference through his volunteer work. Casually dashing off an e-mail from an Internet café in Ghana, Luckow explains that GlobeMed has been a calling for him.

Like many of his peers, Luckow prefers to get his news from Jon Stewart or *The Colbert Report*, but he also digs deep on issues of interest by checking newspapers, magazines, blogs and online news reports. "Students today, for whatever reason, have more information than I remember in the long ago," Hayden says. Luckow likes the idea that he can make an impact on the world through GlobeMed, which mobilizes college students to improve world health by analyzing data, fundraising and preparing them for jobs related to global health care. It was a way for him to apply what he learns in school "to actively strive towards creating a more equitable and just world."

Luckow's passion for wanting to make the world a better place is nothing new, says Barbara Schneider, a sociologist and education professor at Michigan State University. "Developmentally, young people are more likely to take the cause of the underdog. It is a time of identity formation and establishing yourself. Those things aren't any different than they have ever been," she says. In the '60s, universities were expanding rapidly, but only about 35 percent of kids went to college. It was affordable to get an education or for young people to strike out on their own, which was convenient because many were disenchanted with their parents



Police form a wedge shape as they make their way through a crowd of protesters during the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

in what was called a generation gap. Not so today. Often, graduates move home, and young people actually like their parents. Luckow sees his parents as his greatest supporters, as does Heffernan, whose mother is working to get his suspension expunged. Helicopter parents hover over their young adult children, ready to swoop in with money or other resources when needed. Today, it is too expensive for many young adults to make it on their own. About 60 percent of teens seek higher education and rack up huge debts doing so. "There is more dependence on family. The route to establish an adult lifestyle with stable employment was easier to have in the 1960s than today," Schneider says.

Today's youth still have growing pains. When Murphy thinks about his friends, he sees a group looking for a purpose. "It is difficult to put into words, but when I look around, it seems like we're playing around and there is no sense of seriousness. I get from myself and my generation a sense of aimlessness," he says.

Jane Adams, the former SDS marshal,

can relate on two levels. A professor at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, she thinks some of her students are looking for a cause to believe in. And, like her generation, when they find a cause, they can be unsure of themselves. Before becoming involved with SDS, Adams summered in Harmony, Miss., as a civil rights worker. She researched federal grants that would enable folks living in rural areas to build homes. "Mainly I felt like I didn't know what I was doing. I got information about how people could do it, and then I left," Adams says. More than 20 years later, after Adams had started a family and a career as a professor, a reunion tugged her back to Harmony. "My old roommate and I went back, and there were all these houses everywhere. I said, 'Man, I had a little piece of that.'" As Adams looked around, she was shocked by what she had helped accomplish. Now, Adams thinks the times are ready for a new movement.

Those in their late teens and early 20s could very well decide the presidential election, Farber says. Although the group traditionally has not come out in force to

vote, U.S. Sen. Barack Obama has the attention of students like Murphy. "For me, Obama just feels young," he says. "You get the idea when you look at him. It feels like what it must have felt like when Robert Kennedy was running. Here's a guy who can lead a movement."

Kleina also is watching Obama with interest. The idea of a movement is exciting to him. A little more than a year ago, Kleina began looking through his old pictures. He never considered they were very good but thought that they might have some historical significance. It turns out, they are pretty special. He snapped some of the few candid shots ever taken in color of King. As Kleina tours the country, sharing the pictures that are now on display at the Birmingham (Ala.) Civil Rights Institute, he hopes they inspire. He carries packets of the pictures wherever he goes, handing them out to people who show an interest. "I think photos can do so much. They can heal, motivate, inspire, and if I can do that, I will." □

Kristy Kennedy is a Naperville-based free-lance writer.

Unsettled debate

Doctors and lawyers wait for the Illinois Supreme Court to decide whether the state's 2005 medical malpractice reforms are constitutional

by Bethany Jaeger

Before state reforms in 2005, Dr. Richard Byrne considered leaving Chicago's Rush University Medical Center to practice brain surgery in another state.

He says he didn't think Illinois' medical malpractice environment was likely to improve. He refers to rising medical liability insurance rates that peaked in 2003 and 2004. Physician groups called it a crisis.

Brain surgeons were particularly hard-hit by the increasing cost of monthly premiums because everything they do or don't do carries a risk for patients, Byrne says.

"I don't know a neurosurgeon who hasn't been [sued]," he says, citing a March 2004 study by the State Neurosurgical Society that shows 90 percent of Illinois neurosurgeons surveyed reported that they had been sued. They also had an average of five claims each against them.

In the state Capitol, the phrase "there are no neurosurgeons south of Springfield" came to represent the threat of the medical liability issue, but doctors of all specialties statewide were retiring or leaving Illinois to practice where they could pay more affordable premiums.

Byrne ultimately stayed in his native Chicago for family reasons but says brain surgeons had numerous incentives to leave. "Imagine writing checks for \$230,000 just to start the year when you could go to a bordering state and pay \$60,000. I think that's a strong motivator for a lot of people."

The environment has changed since Illinois enacted medical malpractice

reforms in 2005. Insurance premiums have dropped, new insurance companies have started in this state, and brain surgeons again are practicing south of Springfield.

This after two years of polarizing debate that pitted physician groups against trial lawyers. The largest sticking point between those massive lobbying groups was whether to cap the amount that juries could award patients for pain and suffering because of medical negligence. Lawmakers struck a deal and enacted so-called caps on jury awards for pain and suffering. They also enacted tougher insurance regulations and stricter monitoring of doctor discipline.

Caps on noneconomic damages is a fancy way of saying juries are limited in the amount they can award patients for pain and suffering. The state law now sets a limit of \$500,000 for cases against doctors and \$1 million for cases against hospitals.

Insurance companies say those caps add stability to the volatile medical liability market. Lawyers say they're unfair to patients and their families and are ineffective as price controls.

Both sides of the debate agree the 2005 reform package is working, but they cite different reasons. The effect of the compromise, however, could drastically change, pending an Illinois Supreme Court decision. For the third time in about 30 years, the high court has to decide whether to strike down limits on jury awards. They were struck down twice before, but this time around, the

scope of the law is narrower and the political makeup of the court is different.

Sen. Bill Haine, an Alton Democrat and active lawmaker in the malpractice debates, says his area was in "near collapse," with two of four hospitals teetering on closure before the 2005 reforms. Now those hospitals plan to expand.

Haine says while every portion of the reforms is important to enacting a balanced and effective law, he highlights caps on jury awards as the element that calms doctors' nerves so they can focus on practicing rather than on being sued. Caps create a perception that things are better and will stay that way, he says.

"There were many things that came out of this give-and-take and negotiation that made it a better bill. The caps were an anathema for lawyers for well-founded reasons, but the caps were the only way to stem these losses that could not be actualized."

Even with the 2005 trade-off, all sides of the debate expected the law to spend months, if not years, in legal battles.

A constitutional challenge advanced to the Illinois Supreme Court last fall. It involves Abigaile LeBron, who has severe brain damage due to lack of oxygen during her birth in October 2005. The family sued Gottlieb Memorial Hospital, a nonprofit medical facility in Melrose Park near Chicago, along with the doctor and nurse who delivered the infant.

Cook County Circuit Court Judge Diane Larsen ruled in November that

the 2005 state law violates the separation of powers. In other words, the portion of the statute that limits pain and suffering awards would take power away from juries to decide the amount patients could receive. She ruled that the entire law, not just the portion on caps, should be revoked.

That ruling repeats Illinois history.

Caps on jury awards were overturned in 1976, when a \$500,000 limit would have applied to all awards, including economic damages, in medical malpractice cases. In 1997, the court overturned caps for noneconomic damages in all tort cases, not just medical malpractice lawsuits.

The political split of the Illinois Supreme Court could be key in this divisive debate. If the four Democratic justices side with the trial lawyers to oppose caps and the three Republicans back doctor groups to support caps, the law will be revoked.

If that happens, the trade-off between tort reform and insurance reform could become out of whack.

The effectiveness of those reforms is uncertain, with contradictory and convoluted evidence, depending on the source.

Doctors, hospitals and insurance companies say caps are the key to a more stable insurance industry that has allowed rates to drop and doctors to stay.

Dr. Rodney Osborn, president of the Illinois State Medical Society and a practicing anesthesiologist in Peoria, says if the state Supreme Court overrules caps on noneconomic damages, doctors again will leave the state. Since caps have been enacted, lower insurance premiums have made it easier for doctors to pay their operating costs, especially when state and federal Medicaid reimbursement rates are low and overhead costs are high.

"It's an access-to-care issue," Osborn says. "If the doctors leave the state, citizens of Illinois have a much tougher



Gov. Rod Blagojevich signs Illinois' 2005 medical malpractice law.

time getting medical care. The fact that the rates have stabilized and actually reduced a little bit helps in terms of recruiting, retaining physicians and then helps with patients having access to those physicians."

Legal groups beg to differ. The Illinois Trial Lawyers Association argues that insurance reforms, not the caps on noneconomic damages, stabilize the climate, decrease premiums and increase competition.

"There is a lot of information and data that has become available since 2005 because of the insurance reforms that were enacted," says Chicago attorney Bruce Kohen, president of the association. "I want to put an exclamation point on that: Not because of any caps on medical malpractice but because of reforms in the insurance area."

Medical liability insurers now are required to report to the state all malpractice claims paid, including whether they were settled out of court or through a verdict in court.

Kohen says public information shows that facts and figures are inconsistent with what doctors and insurance companies told the public and the legislature during the debate on the issue. He cites ISMIE Mutual Insurance Co., based in Chicago, as an example. The company is owned and operated by physicians and is the largest medical malpractice insurer in

Illinois, with 13,000 policyholders.

From 2003 to 2006, ISMIE collected hundreds of millions of dollars more in premiums than it paid out in claims and defense costs. In 2006, the company's net income doubled to \$50.2 million. Some of the state's 11 other medical malpractice insurance providers also doubled their net incomes but on smaller scales.

The profits gained and the premiums collected all happened before the 2005 reforms went into

effect. In fact, no medical malpractice case with a claim that would exceed the award limit has gone to trial yet, according to the trial lawyers, the insurance companies and the state.

Kohen says the timing of ISMIE's profit reports undermines its claim that the caps are necessary for a stable climate. "They are making staggering and record profits that just continue to increase while telling the public and the legislature that there's this crisis."

ISMIE chairman Dr. Harold Jensen rebuts, "Yes, those figures are correct, but they don't mean what the lawyers say they mean."

What ISMIE collects in premiums in 2008 is based on what actuaries expect up to 2013. Therefore, the amount paid out in 2003 reflects premiums collected in 1999.

That's because it takes an average of more than five years between the time an alleged injury happens and a settlement or a verdict is reached. "Seven years after the alleged injury is when things finally settle down," Jensen says.

Limiting the amount patients can seek in damages for pain and suffering at least helps take the guessing game out of the amount of money insurance companies need to cover those so-called jackpot jury awards, Jensen says.

"Putting a cap on noneconomic losses stabilizes [the insurance market] because

it gets rid of big outliers, the \$18 million and \$20 million figures, that ruin the figures for everybody else and result in raised premiums, which were inappropriate for most of the people we insured.”

The cause-and-effect relationships are clouded by different interpretations of events that happened at the same time. When Illinois enacted caps, the insurance industry also calmed down

and lowered rates.

Kohen maintains that’s partially because competition among insurance companies increased when their financial data became public record.

Ann Storberg, vice president of investor relations for Michigan-based American Physicians Capital Inc., says it helped to have access to ISMIE’s data as a benchmark. Yet APCapital’s 13.7

percent rate decrease was possible because the number of reported claims against the company dropped by double digits in all seven states where it insures doctors.

It also helped that the company has covered Illinois doctors for a decade and can use its own information about state trends to set rates and to decide where to offer policies.

Even with more competition, ISMIE started accepting new policyholders last year after putting a moratorium on new business in 2003. It also started a dividend program that returned money to doctors when total monthly premiums collected exceeded the amount needed to protect a rainy day fund, which is available if a steep jury award threatens the company’s ability to cover policyholders.

Jensen says ISMIE stopped accepting new policyholders before the 2005 reforms because “when the world started collapsing on us in 2002, we were at the point where every dollar we took in in premiums required an extra 19 or 20 cents surcharge on it because things were deteriorating so rapidly.” That surcharge put a dent in the surplus set aside for large jury awards, he says.

The surplus was rebuilt and allowed the company to insure 124 more doctors, he says, partially because fewer claims were filed against doctors in Illinois and across the nation.

Those doctors could face financial risk if the Illinois Supreme Court invalidates the 2005 reforms, he says.

While the tumultuous debate over medical malpractice regulations is expected to reach some finality with an Illinois Supreme Court decision this year, doctor and lawyer Thomas Pliura warns that politics plague the debate, even in the courts.

An emergency room physician by training and a LeRoy lawyer who takes cases related to health care, Pliura supports an amendment to the state Constitution to let voters, not politicians, decide once and for all whether to limit pain and suffering awards.

Until either the courts or the electorate decides the fate of caps, however, at least neurosurgeons are practicing south of Springfield. □



OTHER STATES

Medical groups that favor limits on jury awards for pain and suffering often cite other states where caps have remained intact. Here are a few examples provided by the individual states and the nonprofit think tanks of the National Conference of State Legislatures in Denver, Colo., and the Kaiser Family Foundation in California.

California approved \$250,000 caps for medical malpractice awards in 1975. They withstood a constitutional challenge 10 years later and many other court challenges since. The state also limits attorneys’ fees on a sliding scale based on jury awards and requires patients to file suit within three years of the injury.

Indiana imposes a \$1.25 million limit on total awards and a \$250,000 limit per health care provider. Indiana also has a Patient Compensation Fund that covers awards that exceed the state limits. Patients must file suit within two years of the medical act.

Iowa does not have caps but requires patients to file suit within two years of discovering the injury. That right expires six years after the medical act.

Kentucky does not have caps but does require patients to file suit within one year of when the injury was discovered. The right to sue expires five years after the medical act.

Missouri caps noneconomic damages at \$350,000. Prior to 2005, state law used to adjust that amount for inflation each year. Patients must sue within two years of injury.

Nevada caps jury awards for noneconomic damages at \$350,000 and limits attorneys’ fees on a sliding scale. Patients must sue within four years of the injury. The state law also allows the insurance commissioner to regulate insurance coverage if access is limited in the free market.

Ohio caps noneconomic damages at \$250,000 or three times the economic losses. That can’t exceed \$350,000 per plaintiff or \$500,000 per occurrence. The court must approve all lawyers’ fees if the jury award exceeds the limit, and patients must file suit within one year of the injury.

Oregon’s \$500,000 cap on noneconomic damages was ruled unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court. Patients must sue within two years of discovering the injury but not more than five years after the medical act.

Pennsylvania does not cap jury awards, but it does offer a fund to help health care providers pay for medical liability insurance. The money comes from a sales tax on cigarettes. Patients must file suit within two years of the injury.

Texas amended its constitution in 2003 to limit jury awards for pain and suffering to \$250,000 for each doctor and hospital and \$500,000 for all institutions in the case. Patients must sue within two years of the injury.

Wisconsin limits noneconomic damages at \$750,000. Health care providers also pay into a fund that compensates patients if an award exceeds the \$750,000 limit. Lawyers’ fees also are limited on a sliding scale of one-third for the first \$1 million awarded. Patients must sue within three years of injury but not more than five years of the medical act.

Wanna be a judge?

It's not always what they know that gets candidates on the ballot.
Sometimes it's whom they know

by Abdon Pallasch



State Supreme Court Justice Anne Burke was judged most qualified by a Democratic Party slating committee.

Well, on the bright side of Illinois' judicial elections, the big-business-funded American Tort Reform Association has dropped downstate Madison County from its list of "Judicial Hellholes."

New Democratic Chief Judge Ann Callis, who the Illinois Civil Justice

League — the complainers-in-chief about Madison County's courts — says has cleaned up those courts, received a standing ovation at the league's annual banquet.

And at the biennial meeting of Chicago's ward bosses at the Palmer

House Hilton last year (cigars are no longer allowed), the politicians who slate candidates for judge in Cook County asked questions about candidates' legal credentials, in addition to political ones.

The Chicago Bar Association rated all nine candidates they slated as "qualified,"

In Cook County, the ward bosses' choices may have been found mostly qualified, but politically connected candidates or those married to the politically connected still held a distinct advantage.

and the more critical Chicago Council of Lawyers found eight of the nine qualified.

So maybe Illinois' judicial elections are getting better.

But on the downside, Illinois still holds the national record for most expensive state Supreme Court race for the \$9.3 million raised by business groups and trial lawyers in the Lloyd Karmeier-Gordon Maag matchup in Madison County and southern Illinois in 2004. Republican Karmeier and the business groups won.

And after Karmeier won, he did not recuse himself from the high-profile State Farm case, even though company officials donated more than \$350,000 to his campaign. After rejecting calls for his recusal, Karmeier cast the deciding vote in favor of State Farm, with the divided court throwing out an earlier judgment against the insurance company for using "aftermarket" auto parts.

In Cook County, the ward bosses' choices may have been found mostly qualified, but politically connected candidates or those married to the politically connected still held a distinct advantage. And the Tort Reform Association still lists Cook County as the third-worst court system in the country for lawsuits against businesses.

Here's a closer look at the judicial election process:

In September, in an out-of-the-way conference room in Chicago's otherwise elegant Palmer House, 39 lawyers appeared one at a time before Cook County's 80 Democratic ward and township committeemen, hoping to be slated for judge.

Party loyalty; ethnicity; sometimes the party elders will even consider courtroom experience in slating a judicial candidate. It's not all that different from the party-controlled New York judicial election system that good-government groups challenged before the U.S. Supreme Court last year.

"I have been very loyal to the Democratic Party," Paula Lingo, chief legal adviser to Cook County Recorder of Deeds Eugene Moore, told the committeemen.

"I have worked on many campaigns; I've ... contributed to some of the campaigns," she said, nodding to state Democratic chairman Michael Madigan.

"Mr. Madigan, let's see here, Mayors [Richard M.] Daley and [Harold] Washington, [former Cook County Board] President John Stroger. I was President Stroger's special events coordinator twice on his campaigns."

Despite a perfunctory mention of her 30 years of legal experience, the speech differed little from those seeking slating for the tax appeal board or any other political office. And these party guys and a few women displayed much more interest in political than legal credentials.

"I have worked with [current County Board President] Todd Stroger on his campaign," Lingo continued. "I have been very loyal to the party. I have circulated petitions. I have passed palm cards in the bitter cold. I have driven seniors back and forth to vote on Election Day. I have helped tally the votes on Election Day. I have even served food to workers on Election Day. Nothing has been too great or too small for me to do."

It was a winning performance that earned her a surprise slating, even though she was not a sure thing going in. But eventually she lost the election.

Most of the lawyers groveling before the party bosses were wasting their breath. The most powerful committeemen, who turned out the largest numbers of Democratic votes in last year's election, had already staked a claim to one of the judgeships for their hardest-working precinct captain, who happens to be a lawyer. But a few seats were still in play.

Getting slated in a countywide judicial race is not a sure ticket to the bench. In recent years, Cook County voters have increasingly rejected the choices of party bosses. For more qualified would-be judges? No. For women with Irish names? You bet. In the peculiar world of Cook County judicial elections, lawyers of other ethnicities have taken to officially changing their names to "Fitzgerald" or "Flanagan" or "O'Brien" to run for judge because of the voters' proven affection for Irish names.

James G. Smith lost a race for judge, so he changed his name to James Fitzgerald Smith and won a seat on the circuit court, then the appellate court. After attorney Frederick S. Rhine

changed his name to Patrick O'Brien last year to run for judge, the state legislature passed a law that would require him and other name-changers to include their old names on the ballot.

Jewish attorneys in particular have been hard-hit by Cook County voters' preference for Irish-named judges.

Even with the last name she got from her husband, Bonnie McGrath, a former president of the Decalogue Society of Jewish attorneys, felt she had to adopt the middle name "Fitzgerald" to run for judge. She lost, but her run gave voice to the plight of Jewish attorneys in Chicago who can't seem to win a seat on the bench.

"Despite this community having one of the largest Jewish communities in the world, the number of Cook County Circuit Court judges of the Jewish faith continues to slide lower," Michael Hyman, who has been president of the Decalogue Society and the Chicago Bar Association, told the party bosses. "By slating me, you make a powerful statement to the people of Cook County that the Democratic Party believes in a truly representative and diverse judiciary."

Hyman has a gold-plated resume, including 27 years at the prestigious Much Shelist firm. But he doesn't quite have the pedigree Democratic leaders are looking for. He was never active with the party.

But his speech struck a chord with the Jewish ward and township committeemen.

"Judge Hyman has raised a question that bothers many of us," said Ald. Bernie Stone. "[We] talk about diversity, and yet it has been years since a Jew has been elected to the bench in Cook County. If you really mean what you say about diversity, then it's time that we nominate a Jew to our ticket and go out and work for him to be elected and not double-cross him when it comes to Election Day."

Eugene Pincham, a retired state appellate judge and, at 82, the elder statesman of Chicago's African-American bar, rose to remember the Jewish maitre d' who hired him during law school in the '40s right here in the Palmer House.

"I was a waiter in the Empire Room in this building," Pincham said. "The maitre d' said to me, 'If you're in school,

don't tell me 'cause I cannot hire you. Hide your books.' Five-thirty in the evening until 1 o'clock in the morning during law school. The maitre d' was a Jew. He hired me. I haven't forgotten. When I hear this nonsense that a Jew cannot be elected countywide, it hurts your heart."

Turning to Hyman, Pincham said, "If we slate you, brother, you're in." And he did win the primary election.

When Illinois adopted popular elections for judges early in the last century, it was a reform measure to improve the quality of jurists. Now advocates for reform argue that appointing judges through "merit selection" — also known as the Missouri Plan after the state that pioneered it — produces the best results.

But party elders argue that if elections are good enough to choose offices such as president and governor, they are good enough for the office of judge. Minority bar groups say appointive systems short-change them.

Some merit selection plans have the governor make the appointment. Illinois' last governor, George Ryan, is in federal prison on a corruption conviction, and the current one, Rod Blagojevich, is referred to as "Individual A" in a federal indictment of a close friend, though he himself is not charged with anything. Would their appointees be better judges than the ones the voters/parties choose?

It's irrelevant. Illinois' reformers recognize there is no will on the part of Illinois' legislative leaders to change the system that gives them say in who becomes judge.

"The Illinois State Bar Association has been on record for a long time supporting a merit-based process for judges," says ISBA President Joe Bisceglia. "I doubt that in my lifetime, no matter how long I live, that that is going to happen. It's not a political reality. We have managed to improve the state of the judiciary in Illinois despite the elective process. With our evaluation process, if we can get that message across to voters by partnering with newspapers and other media, I think that would become like de facto merit selection."

The general election is irrelevant in Cook County judicial elections because no Republican has beaten a Democrat in



Madison County Chief Justice Ann Callis won accolades for cleaning up her courts.

decades. The whole ball game is the Democratic primary election, which used to be held around St. Patrick's Day but was moved up to February 5 this year to help favorite son U.S. Sen. Barack Obama's presidential run.

The February date also was expected to be better "machine" weather. Party faithful will brave snowstorms while occasional voters stay home.

Voters choose about half of Cook County's judges in countywide elections; the other half through 15 smaller "sub-circuits" throughout the county designed to elect more African Americans, Hispanics, even Republicans.

The regional slating sessions for the subcircuits can be even more entertaining than the downtown one. Many subcircuits dispense with the pretense of a slating session. The most powerful ward bosses in the subcircuit just agree among themselves whose turn it is to get the best precinct captain with a law degree on the bench.

The 8th subcircuit stretches from downtown up through the toniest neighborhoods of lakefront condos on the North Shore of Lake Michigan. It has the highest density of lawyers in the city and the only openly gay alderman, Tom Tunney, from the Wrigley Field neighborhood.

Ald. Patrick O'Connor, Mayor Daley's unofficial floor leader, has waited his

turn to get a judge, and everyone knew the slating would go to his able precinct captain, Jim Burns.

But they held a slating anyway at LaDonna Italian Restaurant. Eight politicians sat around a table with bruschetta and mortadella in a private upstairs room.

One by one, the lawyers who would be judge climbed upstairs and stood at the head of the table fielding questions. The pols are not used to outsiders. No member of the public attends.

The pols invited a reporter to pull up a chair and have some bruschetta.

"Here," gravelly voiced Ald. Burton Natarus said, pushing the plate of bruschetta. "It's a bribe for a better story."

Natarus was one of the Jewish politicians pushing Hyman's candidacy at the big slating, and he picked up the theme here: Does former federal prosecutor James Shapiro think a Jew can win in the district?

"We have not had a very good record of electing Jewish candidates," Natarus told him.

Shapiro said he thinks he can win.

Natarus complimented the odds-on favorite, Burns, after Burns mentioned his parents were both Irish immigrants, by saying, "I'll be very honest with you. When you walked in the door and I saw that nose, I thought you were Jewish."

"It's been broken a few times," Burns said with a chuckle.

Natarus queried another candidate why he has hired political consultant Dan Shomon to run his campaign.

Shomon just ran the campaign of Brendan Reilly, who beat Natarus out of his aldermanic seat after 40 years on the job.

"I am familiar, on the receiving end, of Dan Shomon, so I know what he is capable of," Natarus said.

There is one question they ask of all candidates: If the party doesn't slate them, will they run anyway against the party's candidate, or will they seek the party's favor by sitting this race out and waiting until the party tells them it's time to run?

All the candidates except Burns said they'll run anyway, prompting Natarus to tell Burns, "We'll you're a nice guy — you're the nicest guy we've seen tonight."

Burns got the nod.

At the big slating, the Democratic committeemen chose qualified and very connected candidates: one married to an appellate justice; another married to political consultant Phil Krone; another the daughter of a bodyguard to the late Mayor Richard J. Daley. But there was actual argument this time about whom to slate for a couple of the seats.

At the end of the debate, Ald.

Edward Burke, who runs the show, lamented, "It was a hell of a lot easier in the old days when Mayor Richard J. Daley handed you a list."

The highest spot getting slated was for a seat on the State Supreme court. And the candidate these folks found most qualified in all of Illinois was Anne Burke, who chaired the national conference of lay Catholics overseeing the priest sex abuse scandal.

She's also married to Ald. Burke.

No one in Cook County filed to run against her.

Is this the best way to pick judges?

"As long as the people running for judge are making the same sorts of promises, doing the same sorts of fundraising as other politicians do, that's probably not the best way to get our judges," says Chicago Council of Lawyers president Daniel Coyne.

One option the council has toyed with, and which former appellate Justice Gino Divito has advocated, would reform the retention elections that judges have to sit through every six years.

If a "blue-ribbon panel" were named by various state officials to evaluate judges and only those who failed to meet a certain standard had to stand for retention election, the public might be able to focus more on a few bad apples instead of having to vote "yes" or "no" on 70 judges, as they do now in Cook County.

That's not as much of an issue in downstate counties, where fewer judges' names appear on the ballot. Voters in downstate Madison County in 2004 not only voted for Karmeier over Maag in the Supreme Court election but also kicked Maag out of his appellate seat, despite his good bar ratings.

For better or worse, Callis and the

other Democratic judges got a message from Maag's defeat.

"I am a Democrat, but I am foremost a public servant," Callis told attendees at the Civil Justice League banquet at Maggiano's in Chicago. "I don't think being both is mutually exclusive."

An unlikely agent of change, Callis is the daughter of a prominent trial lawyer in the county President George W. Bush chose two years ago to showcase what he calls out-of-control courts that he thinks Congress should rope in with limits on verdicts.

When Callis ran for presiding judge a year ago, "I really believed I could make a difference in what was going on in Madison County, improve our image," she said.

She and her fellow judges — all but two of them Democrats — began making changes welcomed by the business executives and not so popular with the plaintiffs' lawyers who helped elect them.

"All our rule changes are unanimous," she noted. First of all, lawyers can no longer use a loophole to get the judge they want in the blue-collar county near St. Louis. It used to be that in a class-action suit, if a lawyer used up his or her one "substitution of judge" and got a new judge he or she didn't like, the lawyer could just keep adding new members of the class and get another shot at a new judge each time. That's over.

Another change applies to lawyers from outside Madison County who want to file cases there because they have heard about big verdicts. Those lawyers now face a lengthy and cumbersome registration process to justify why suits are filed in Madison County.

Also, every medical malpractice lawsuit filed in Madison County now faces mandatory mediation before lawyers can try filing it in court.

Those changes dropped the number of class-action suits filed in Madison County from 106 in 2003 to just one so far this year.

"I want everyone who walks into that court to believe they're going to get a fair shake," Callis said. □

Abdon Pallasch is a political reporter for the Chicago Sun-Times.

Cash crunch

Illinois college students are caught between universities' rising costs and the state's declining funds

by Patrick O'Brien

Jessica Brinton, a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Springfield, says she got a good deal at state schools, even though she has \$50,000 in student loans that also stem from her undergraduate years at Illinois State University in Normal. She wonders, however, if the term "affordable" should still apply to public higher education in this state.

"It depends on what you mean by affordable. I'm going to be in debt the rest of my life," she says.

College students likely will continue to pay increasing tuition at state schools as a result of the state's budget problems, driving loan debts even higher. With the state's economic climate projected to worsen, higher education may face the budget ax in the state Capitol again this spring. State universities are forced to charge more for essentially the same product year after year, and students may get little relief from lawmakers any time soon.

It wasn't always this way in Illinois. As recently as 2000, the state received an "A" in affordability in *Measuring Up*, a national report card of how states rank in higher education. Published by the National Center for Public Policy and



Photograph courtesy of Illinois State University

State funding for four-year public universities in Illinois has decreased since 2002.

Higher Education in San Jose, Calif., the report compares state trends in higher education with the best-performing states in five categories. Illinois' grade in affordability dropped to an "F" in 2006.

When it came to a family's ability to pay for an education at a public, four-year university in 2006, Illinois tied for 41st. For two-year public community colleges, Illinois ranked 25th. Two-thirds of the college students in Illinois — or more than 550,000 — attend public universities or community colleges, according to the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Brinton says it's a necessary evil for students to borrow increasingly large amounts of money to cover rising tuition, but she wonders if it has to be that way.

She calls the student loan situation "a tragedy," saying the way repayments are scheduled is designed to "make money for the lenders, not help students repay their debt."

Recent scandals involving universities steering students toward preferred lenders have provided ammunition to critics of the loan process.

Democratic Rep. Gary Hannig, the lead budget negotiator in the Illinois House, says it's easy to see how state

budget troubles affect the bottom line of Illinois schools. "At universities, they cope with the loss of state money by raising tuition. We gave them that power back in 1995 to raise tuition when they needed to."

State universities have used that power often since Illinois' economic downturn in 2002. Students and their families feel it the most.

Hannig, who lives in downstate Litchfield, sees a pattern of poor funding for higher education in Illinois and says that many state agencies could see budget cuts even before year's end to adjust for declining sales tax revenues. Higher education has already seen an overall decrease of \$217.7 million to just over \$2.2 billion in nonpension money since

Privately endowed

While students who attend public colleges and universities in Illinois face dwindling resources because of stagnant state funding, private college students of all incomes are getting a boost from their institution's multibillion-dollar endowments and other resources.

And there's increasing pressure to do so.

Yale University in Connecticut faced congressional pressure in January to increase spending from its \$22.5 billion endowment, which the school said would greatly increase student aid. Yale also will increase tuition, but by only 2.2 percent next year, the expected rate of inflation.

Tuition and fees at Yale currently are \$34,530. Families of students who make less than \$60,000 a year don't pay tuition, and middle-class families making less than \$120,000 a year contribute 1 percent to 10 percent of their income toward tuition, room and board.

Only 26 percent of Yale students have student loans, compared with 55 percent of students who attend Illinois public schools.

Harvard University in Massachusetts has a \$34.5 billion endowment and will increase financial aid to students by at least \$22 million next year.

The largest endowments in Illinois are at Northwestern University in Evanston and the University of Chicago, both of which have about \$6 billion available.

For smaller private schools such as Blackburn College in Carlinville, slashing tuition also is an option. Blackburn will cut tuition by 15 percent to \$13,500 for next year's incoming students. The school can afford to do that because it saves money by mandating students to work, and their wages go straight toward tuition.

In 2005, North Park University in Chicago cut tuition by more than \$6,000 a year in a successful effort to attract more applicants. Tuition will be \$17,500 next fall for new students, \$4,000 less than in 2005.

Patrick O'Brien

fiscal year 2002. Further strain on university budgets could push tuition hikes even higher this spring.

Since Gov. Rod Blagojevich took office in 2003, there's little else to cut from higher education to balance the state budget, according to Hannig. "Since he's moved so much money in the past, there's little cushion left. He's trimmed most of the fat."

Carrie Hightman, chairwoman of the state's higher education board, is preparing a new type of budget for state legislators and the governor. Previously, the board requested a flat amount. The new system would request funding based on whether lawmakers allow universities to expand, including hiring new faculty and staff. Hightman says the board will submit to lawmakers various budget scenarios, all of which assume minimal increases in state funds.

Hannig says the legislature reacted to previous budget cuts by directing new money to lower- and middle-income students through the Monetary Award Program, which provides income-based grants to students to help pay tuition. Those grants represent 90 percent of the funds distributed by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. The state panel administers programs to make higher education more affordable for students with financial need and acts as a financial aid center for students and their families.

Legislation is pending in the state Senate to increase the grant from a maximum of \$4,968 per student to \$5,466, a 10 percent jump. The sponsor of the measure, Democratic Rep. David Miller of Lynwood, says the bill faces an uncertain fate in what promises to be a tough budget year.

"We want to make it reflect the current costs of higher education. There is the potential for students to be left out."

Whether Miller's legislation has the support of the Blagojevich Administration was unclear at press time. Hannig suggests that the governor has focused on primary and secondary education and health care initiatives to "the exclusion of all else." In a year when there will be pressure to shrink the state budget, and with a governor who has vowed not to increase income or sales taxes, higher education is unlikely to get a boost in funding. It actually could see a decrease in state money.

Miller says there is pressure on the administration to respond to the issue by providing more resources for needy students. "It's a shame that it can't be affordable. The state has a moral responsibility to the students who do well, no matter where they come from."

Less than 30 percent of students attending public universities and community colleges receive MAP grants, according to state records.

The current situation belies the state's reputation for catering to lower-income students. Even in the leanest budget years, Illinois has consistently ranked high in devoting resources to low- and middle-income students. In fact, Illinois ranks seventh nationally in supplying need-based financial aid, according to *Measuring Up's* national comparison for 2006.

That's still not enough, according to Mark Wilcockson, vice president of finance and administration at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. Northeastern is home to many low- and middle-income students, and the state doesn't provide enough funding to support students with financial need, he says.

His main concern is that MAP grant funding is outdated because it's designed to cover tuition at 2004 rates. The program also received no new money in the current state budget, and its budget has increased only 4 percent since 2002, according to Illinois State Board of Higher Education records.

The measure awaiting action in the Senate would update the MAP grant program to better cover current tuition prices.

The average grant given to students covered most of tuition and fees at public universities in 2002, but it only pays for about 58 percent of tuition and fees at state schools this year. This "MAP Gap" leaves students with a higher tuition burden.

Because the grant covers college costs at 2004 tuition levels, University of Illinois campuses have set aside money to pay for the difference between 2004 and 2008 tuition.

Northeastern, however, does not have the resources to implement such a program, according to Wilcockson. The university cut spending 2 percent across the board from its current budget because state funding has decreased



ILLINOIS PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Fiscal Year 2008 tuition

All full-time resident undergraduate students*

	SENIORS	JUNIORS	SOPHOMORES	FRESHMEN
Chicago State	\$4,830	\$5,220	\$5,670	\$6,180
Eastern Illinois	\$4,133	\$4,629	\$5,207	\$5,832
Governors State	\$4,080	\$4,470	\$4,890	\$5,370
Illinois State	\$4,800	\$5,400	\$6,150	\$6,990
Northeastern Illinois	\$3,720	\$4,800	\$5,250	\$5,850
Northern Illinois	\$4,812	\$5,261	\$5,750	\$6,350
Southern Ill. Carbondale	\$4,920	\$5,310	\$5,808	\$6,348
Southern Ill. Edwardsville	\$4,020	\$4,350	\$4,758	\$5,228
U of I Chicago	\$5,682	\$6,194	\$6,780	\$7,424
U of I Springfield	\$4,005	\$4,575	\$5,580	\$6,360
U of I Urbana-Champaign	\$6,460	\$7,042	\$7,708	\$8,440
Western Illinois	\$4,538	\$4,968	\$5,439	\$5,895
AVERAGE	\$4,667	\$5,185	\$5,749	\$6,356

*Annual based on 30 credit hours

SOURCE: Illinois Board of Higher Education

more than 10 percent since 2002. For the first time, those cuts also applied to academics; they previously applied mostly to such areas as equipment and infrastructure.

Wilcockson says state schools find it difficult to compete with private universities for professors and other employees. He cites a project manager who left for Northwestern University in Evanston because the heavily endowed private school could pay 30 percent more for “essentially the same job.”

The direction of public higher education in Illinois is at risk, Wilcockson says, because “public universities are finding it difficult to move forward. It’s like treading water.”

Schools have found different coping methods. The University of Illinois, for example, uses its extensive donor network to compensate for declining state funds. The university’s three campuses, in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield, benefited from \$11.3 million in supplemental student aid for the 2007-2008 school year, according to Richard Herman, chancellor of the Urbana-Champaign campus. Herman says the school had almost zero dollars in that aid category several years ago but has adjusted as state aid failed to keep up with students’ costs.

Part of the strategy was to appeal to donors to give gifts that target need-based financial aid, which accounts for 45 percent of the financial aid given out by the university, Herman says.

To overcome the cash crunch and to afford expansion, the Springfield campus has benefited from students contributing to more than just school operations, according to Harry Berman, university provost.

For instance, students voted several years ago to tax themselves to help fund the campus’ new recreation and athletic center. The university used the fees in lieu of state capital construction money, which has been reduced to zero in recent years on many new state projects. Students’ rent payments for new dormitories on campus also have helped underwrite the bonds used to construct them, Berman says.

The growth of the Springfield campus hasn’t come without other costs to each new group of incoming students, however, as the school has increased tuition 14 percent and 22 percent in each of the past two years. Those rates are locked in for four years under the state’s Truth-in-Tuition law. This equates to about 3.5 percent and 5.5 percent a year. The increase for the next group of students will be released this month, according to Berman.

Berman adds that UIS was underpriced in past years. Before the recent tuition increases, the school charged near the bottom in tuition among the state’s public universities. It is now near the middle.

At the same time, UIS offers small class sizes, rarely exceeding 50, taught by full-time faculty rather than graduate assistants. “It is expensive to provide that kind of instruction,” he says.

State schools likely will have to continue to be creative in how they cope with less state funding.

Hightman of the higher education board says an analysis of the state’s economic picture, coupled with the national economy, lowers confidence in more funding for higher education. “We have to acknowledge that next year is probably going to be worse than this year.”

The board’s own outlook for the next budget chronicles the decline. “When adjusted for inflation, state funding for public universities in fiscal year 2008 is \$97.3 million, or 6.3 percent less than in fiscal year 1993.” State funding for every four-year public university in the state has decreased since 2002, ranging from 1.4 percent to 11.1 percent.

At the same time, students continue to rack up debt to pay for the state’s budget problems. Illinois tied for 38th for states with low student debt and continues to fall, according to *Measuring Up’s* 2006 data.

The Board of Higher Education adds that loans now account for 55 percent of student resources for college educations in Illinois, despite efforts by public schools to beef up grants and need-based aid.

Middle-class students such as Brinton from Aurora, who do not qualify for a MAP grant or other need-based programs, have to compete for highly competitive, merit-based scholarships and find other ways to finance school. □

BITS

John Stroger

The former Cook County Board president died January 18, two years after a debilitating stroke. He was 78.

The stroke ended a 40-year political career that culminated when Stroger served as president of the board from 1994 to 2006. The recently built Cook County Hospital bears his name.

Stroger's son Todd, the current board president, told the *Chicago Tribune*: "He dedicated his life to his family and gave generously of himself as an elected official. His love for this county knew no bounds, and he will be deeply missed."

The elder Stroger was credited with balancing the county's \$2.9 billion budget and creating a Juvenile Drug Court. One of his favorite causes was health care, and under his watch, a new AIDS research and treatment facility was built in Cook County.

The first African-American president of the board, Stroger co-sponsored ordinances for human rights, ethics and an assault-weapons ban.

He also was Democratic committeeman for Chicago's 8th Ward and learned politics during the high point of the Democratic machine in the 1960s and '70s.

Federal trial updates

- **Antoin "Tony" Rezko's** trial for alleged political corruption is postponed until March 3. Rezko, a political fundraiser for many Illinois politicians, pleaded not guilty to receiving kickbacks and illegal fees from investment firms seeking business with the state.

- The defense team of former Gov. **George Ryan** and businessman **Lawrence Warner** appealed their federal corruption convictions to the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing they received an unfair trial. In November, Ryan started serving a 6 1/2-year sentence and Warner a 3 1/2-year sentence.

Adeline Geo-Karis

The Illinois' Senate's longest-serving member and former mayor of Zion died February 10. She was 89.

As a state legislator, she represented the northeastern tip of Illinois for more than three decades. Elected to the Illinois House in 1973 and to the Senate in 1979, she previously told *Illinois Issues* that she felt proudest of her legislation for nuclear safety preparedness, alternative energy sources and new sentencing for people with mental illnesses. The first woman in Illinois history to serve in Senate leadership, Geo-Karis served 10 years as assistant Senate majority leader from 1993 to 2003.

Her legislative career ended when she lost a primary re-election bid in 2006.

"Believe it or not, I'm delighted it's over with, and I have no regrets," she said shortly after the election.

Born in Greece, she moved to Illinois as a child. She became a woman in a man's world, first studying political science at Northwestern University in Evanston and then earning her law degree from DePaul University in Chicago in 1942. She later ran her own law firm and served as a justice of the peace and an assistant state's attorney in Lake County.

She also was a military veteran, retiring as lieutenant commander with top-secret clearance in the U.S. Naval Reserves, based at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center in North Chicago.

Senate Minority Leader Frank Watson said in a statement that Geo-Karis "left an indelible mark on Illinois government" and was "proud to know she was the Grand Old Lady of the Grand Old Party."

Eugene Sawyer

The former Chicago mayor, who took office amid a controversy after the death of Harold Washington in 1987, died January 19. He was 73.

Sawyer won a close vote of the Chicago City Council to take the place of Washington as the city's second African-American mayor.

In his acceptance speech, Sawyer vowed to continue Washington's efforts to clean up local government. "Harold's victories symbolized a new sun shining on our city, and my administration will fight to keep the clouds from coming over it," he said, according to the *Chicago City Council Journal of Proceedings* from December 2, 1987. "As [Washington] stated so emphatically, patronage as we once knew it is dead, dead, dead!"

He lost the Democratic primary election to the current mayor, Richard M. Daley, two years later.

According to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Daley said during a Chicago City Council meeting honoring Sawyer: "People thought quietness and calmness was a weakness. It was never a weakness in Gene Sawyer. At perhaps the most divisive time in Chicago's political history, Mayor Eugene Sawyer started us on the road back to civility and racial understanding."

Sawyer graduated from Alabama State University in Montgomery. He moved to Chicago and was elected Democratic committeeman of the 6th Ward in 1968 and alderman in 1971. Serving as alderman 17 years, he became the senior black alderman of the City Council until his election as acting mayor.

Sawyer died a day after former Cook County Board President **John Stroger** died.



Eugene Sawyer

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

Time for change

A number of changes in Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration occurred around his annual budget address in February:

- **Kelley Quinn**, spokeswoman for the Office of Management and Budget since January, previously worked in Cook County Clerk David Orr's office. She also was a reporter for a newspaper in upstate New York and a court reporter for the Chicago *Daily Law Bulletin*.

- **Bob Arya** became deputy director of the Office of Communication and Information and remains a senior adviser to the governor. Before joining state government, he spent 11 years as a news anchor and reporter for Chicagoland's Television.

- **Rikeesha Cannon** was promoted from spokeswoman for the Department of Human Services to senior communication manager of the Office of Communication and Information. She formerly was a spokeswoman for the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law in Chicago.

- **Marielle Sainvilus** switched from a press officer with the governor's office to a spokeswoman for the Department of Human Services and director of the governor's multicultural media affairs.

- **Cybil Rose** is spokeswoman for Central Management Services. She has a decade of experience working behind the scenes in local Chicago news, including as executive news producer for CLTV.

- **Ashley Cross**, former spokeswoman for Allstate Insurance Co., joined state government as a spokeswoman for the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

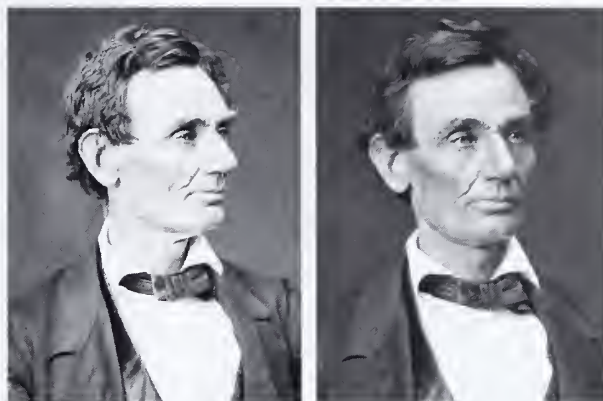
- **Paris Ervin**, former reporter for Springfield's ABC affiliate, WICS News Channel 20, is a spokeswoman for the departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

- **Joseph Handley** of Decatur, the governor's deputy chief of staff for legislative affairs, left state government to work as vice president of the Cable Television and Communications Association of Illinois based in Des Plaines.

He'll reopen the association's Springfield office.

Limited Edition Hesler prints now available

Alexander Hesler's companion portraits of presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln, taken in Springfield on June 3, 1860, are stunning photographs. Exposed on 8" x 10" light-sensitive glass plates, the images are among the most eloquent and revealing of Illinois' greatest statesman before he left Springfield for Washington.



The Illinois State Historical Society acquired the glass plate positives (the original negatives are in the Smithsonian, damaged beyond repair) and has commissioned archive-quality prints of the Hesler portraits.

In anticipation of the Lincoln Bicentennial in 2009, The Society now offers a limited edition (500) of the 16" x 20" Hesler Lincoln Portraits (shown above), double matted and beautifully framed (choice of natural wood or gilt) with non-glare glass and adorned with a simple brass plate: *A. Lincoln, June 3, 1860*. The photographs are sold only in pairs for \$1,000, plus shipping and applicable sales tax for non-members.

Matted Hesler prints and walnut framed prints are also available at lesser prices.

For more information about the Limited Edition Heslers, call 217-525-2781 today.



TRI STATES PUBLIC RADIO

WIUM 91.3 & WIUW 89.5

Listen online at www.tristatesradio.com

NEWS, INFORMATION, & ENTERTAINMENT FROM



**NATIONAL PUBLIC
RADIO**



**PRI
PUBLIC RADIO
INTERNATIONAL**



**GREAT LAKES RADIO
CONSORTIUM**

TRI STATES
PUBLIC RADIO
WIUM 91.3 & WIUW 89.5

TRI STATES PUBLIC RADIO
WIUM 91.3/WIUW 89.5

News Department

Phone: 309/298-1873 Fax: 309/298-2133 E-mail: rg-egger@wiu.edu



Write us

Your comments are welcome.
Please keep them brief (250 words).
We reserve the right to excerpt them.

Letters to the Editor
Illinois Issues
University of Illinois at Springfield
Springfield, IL 62794-9243
e-mail address on Internet:
heupel.dana@uis.edu

And visit Illinois Issues online by going to:
<http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

Why subscribe to *Illinois Issues* in an election year?

Because **83 %**^{*}
of our readers cite the magazine
as the place to go to find useful information
on Illinois politics and elections.

Illinois Issues

The state's leading public affairs magazine

Call (217) 206-6084 to subscribe.
Or, check out our web site at: <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

*Illinois Issues 2006 Readership Survey

Illinois Network of
Centers for Independent Living

it's we
What do...

Leading the Way for Full Inclusion of
Illinois' Citizens with Disabilities

1 West Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 501
Springfield, IL 62701
217-525-1308 V/tty
217-525-1312 fax
www.incil.org

Smarter Radio. Smarter You!

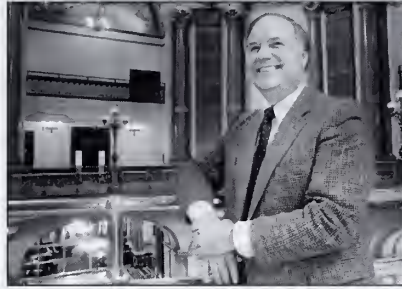
WUIS 91.9



More and more people
are turning to public radio
for factual, credible news
and information. Tune in
to WUIS — the capital
city's NPR station — for the
best in music, news, infor-
mation and talk.

For the program schedule,
visit www.wuis.org.

Charles N. Wheeler III



Has there been a tectonic shift in regional party strength in Illinois?

by Charles N. Wheeler III

Was it a fluke? A one-time phenomenon triggered by a charismatic favorite son?

Or do the results of last month's primary election signal a tectonic shift in regional party strength in Illinois?

Certainly no one was surprised that U.S. Sen. Barack Obama easily outpolled U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton in the Democratic presidential contest. After all, hadn't party leaders intentionally engineered the primary vote six weeks earlier than usual, just to boost Obama's national fortunes?

The junior senator came through as expected, almost doubling the former first lady's popular vote, with slightly more than 1.3 million to her 666,000 and change, in unofficial returns.

The real eye-opener in the primary, though, was the sheer volume of the Democratic vote. Obama, for example, polled more votes than all nine Democratic presidential hopefuls in the 2004 primary. In fact, he racked up some 1,300 more votes than the total number of Democratic ballots cast four years ago.

And, for the first time since the modern-day primary system came into being some 40 years ago, more Democrats than Republicans voted in each of the five collar counties surrounding Chicago, including DuPage County, long the symbol of GOP might.

The real eye-opener in the primary, though, was the sheer volume of the Democratic vote.

Unofficial returns showed that Democrats cast more than 131,000 votes in DuPage County, topping Republican voters by almost 24,000 ballots. In similar fashion, more Democrats than Republicans voted in Kane and McHenry counties, another first. In all, more than 392,000 Democratic presidential votes were cast in the five counties, roughly 200,000 more than in 2004 and almost five times the Democratic turnout in 2000, when 77 percent of collar county primary voters took Republican ballots.

Outside the Chicago area, Democrats outvoted Republicans in 57 of the 96 downstate counties, an 11-county gain from their 2004 showing.

The Democratic surge was fueled no doubt by the historic match-up between Obama and Clinton, the first time in national history that the two leading contenders for a major party's presidential nomination did not include a white male.

Moreover, Obama's rock-star persona seems to have energized young people and political outsiders to an extent not seen in decades, reminding some of Jack Kennedy and others of Gene McCarthy.

The senator's appeal to younger voters seems evident in the primary returns from six downstate counties that are home to some of the state's largest public universities. Together, the six counties saw their Democratic vote almost double, while GOP numbers increased by only about 10 percent. In Champaign County, for example, home of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, slightly more than 23,000 voters cast Democratic ballots, almost three-quarters of them for Obama, compared with roughly 15,000 for Republican candidates. Four years ago, the total Democratic vote was just shy of 12,000, while the GOP garnered more than 14,000.

Similar large Democratic gains occurred in Coles (Eastern Illinois University), DeKalb (Northern Illinois University) and McDonough (Western Illinois University) counties, all of which saw Republican majorities in the 2004 presidential primary. Jackson County (Southern Illinois University Carbondale), usually reliably Democratic through the years, experienced a 14 percent increase in Democratic voters. Democrats even gained ground in

McLean County (Illinois State University), going to 49 percent of the primary ballots cast from less than a third in 2004.

While Democrats can revel in the numbers, Republicans rightly should be concerned. Some party elders believe the remarkable Democratic showing merely reflects the diverse choice offered to party voters, along with Obama's personal charisma. Sure, they say, the senator has brought a lot of new folks to the polls with his message of change, vague though it may be. But will these newbies be as enthusiastic in November, when the novelty will have worn off? Especially if the Democratic contest continues neck and neck to the convention in Denver, and the nominee ultimately is chosen by party chieftains, also called superdelegates?

Moreover, they point out that Democrats generally do better in the spring than in the fall. In the general election four years ago, for example, President George W. Bush won 82 of 96 downstate counties, including 34 that pulled more

Democratic ballots in March.

Clearly, the GOP brass is hoping for a similar reversal for the sake of the party's local candidates and for its future return to prominence in the Land of Lincoln. The concern is an Obama landslide — if he's the Democrats' nominee — that could cost Republicans congressional and legislative seats, and perhaps local offices, too, if new voters drawn by the senator hew to the party line on down the ballot.

But underlying the Obama mystique could be a more threatening reality for Republicans. What if February's historic shift in collar county voting patterns is but another step in the ongoing partisan realignment of the suburbs, nurtured by demographic change and party ideology?

Consider the demographics. Two years ago, Democrats elected state senators from four suburban districts, two of them with significant chunks of counties that had never before sent a Democrat to the Senate. In both districts, though, the population of Hispanic residents has

been growing, many of whom are inclined to vote Democratic. The virulent anti-immigrant rhetoric spouted by some Republican politicians wins the party few friends among these voters, whose collar county numbers are projected to increase markedly in coming years. Not a cheerful prospect for the GOP.

Political realignment in response to demographic change is nothing new in suburbia, of course. A few decades ago, west suburban Cicero boasted a strong Bohemian ethnic flavor and one of Cook County's strongest Republican township organizations. Now, the town is roughly 80 percent Hispanic and a Democratic bastion. Similarly, the once solid Republican south suburbs have become safe Democratic havens as their minority citizens have increased in number.

The 2008 primary suggests a similar future could await the collar counties, its arrival hastened by the meteoric rise of Barack Obama. □

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.



GRASSROOTS LOBBYING

Issue Advocacy

Target Politicians

REACH VOTERS

CAMPAIGN ENDORSEMENTS

ADVOCATE, INFORM, INFLUENCE!

Use The Proven Power of Print.

THE ILLINOIS PRESS ADVERTISING SERVICE GETS RESULTS!

- Customized quotes to fit your budget.
- Graphic Designer to create your print campaign.
- Tear sheets and one invoice!

We make newspaper advertising EASY!



ILLINOIS PRESS
Advertising Service

The Illinois Press Advertising Service
900 Community Drive. Springfield, IL 62703
Phone: 217.241.1700 Fax: 217.241.1701
www.illinoispress.org jholman@il-press.com

THE ILLINOIS GOVERNORS

Mostly Good and Competent

The updated edition of this classic book about the Illinois governors concludes that they were a cross section of the political ideas and social attitudes of their times.



☒ Yes, I want to order today

_____ copies x \$34.95.....

plus postage and handling (\$4.00 first book, \$1.00 for each additional book) + _____

TOTAL _____

Ship to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Bill to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me later

To order by credit card call the Center Publications office at (217) 206-6502.

McLean County (Illinois State University), going to 49 percent of the primary ballots cast from less than a third in 2004.

While Democrats can revel in the numbers, Republicans rightly should be concerned. Some party elders believe the remarkable Democratic showing merely reflects the diverse choice offered to party voters, along with Obama's personal charisma. Sure, they say, the senator has brought a lot of new folks to the polls with his message of change, vague though it may be. But will these newbies be as enthusiastic in November, when the novelty will have worn off? Especially if the Democratic contest continues neck and neck to the convention in Denver, and the nominee ultimately is chosen by party chieftains, also called superdelegates?

Moreover, they point out that Democrats generally do better in the spring than in the fall. In the general election

Democratic ballots in March.

Clearly, the GOP brass is hoping for a similar reversal for the sake of the party's local candidates and for its future return to prominence in the Land of Lincoln. The concern is an Obama landslide — if he's the Democrats' nominee — that could cost Republicans congressional and legislative seats, and perhaps local offices, too, if new voters drawn by the senator hew to the party line on down the ballot.

But underlying the Obama mystique could be a more threatening reality for Republicans. What if February's historic shift in collar county voting patterns is but another step in the ongoing partisan realignment of the suburbs, nurtured by demographic change and party ideology?

Consider the demographics. Two years ago, Democrats elected state senators from four suburban districts, two of them with significant chunks of counties

been growing, many of whom are inclined to vote Democratic. The virulent anti-immigrant rhetoric spouted by some Republican politicians wins the party few friends among these voters, whose collar county numbers are projected to increase markedly in coming years. Not a cheerful prospect for the GOP.

Political realignment in response to demographic change is nothing new in suburbia, of course. A few decades ago, west suburban Cicero boasted a strong Bohemian ethnic flavor and one of Cook County's strongest Republican township organizations. Now, the town is roughly 80 percent Hispanic and a Democratic bastion. Similarly, the once solid Republican south suburbs have become safe Democratic havens as their minority citizens have increased in number.

The 2008 primary suggests a similar future could await the collar counties, its arrival hastened by the meteoric rise of Barack Obama. □



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 1901 SPRINGFIELD, IL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

Center Publications

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT SPRINGFIELD

PO Box 19243

Springfield, IL 62794-9980



CAMPAIGN ENDORSEMENTS



Advertising Service

900 Community Drive, Springfield, IL 62703
Phone: 217.241.1700 Fax: 217.241.1701
www.illinoispress.org jholman@il-press.com

AVAILABLE
NOW!

THE ILLINOIS GOVERNORS

Mostly Good and Competent

The updated edition of this classic book about the Illinois governors concludes that they were a cross section of the political ideas and the social attitudes of their times.

They could be scoundrels:

- One has just been sentenced
- Two served time
- Three beat the rap

But they could be visionary leaders:

- One freed his slaves
- One helped the new state get free of debt
- One changed the face of modern state government



The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent introduces you to all of the state's chief executives, from Shadrach Bond to Rod Blagojevich. It builds on the work of Robert Howard, the late newspaperman and historian who first wrote about the governors in 1988. Taylor Pensoneau, a biographer of Illinois politicians, and Peggy Boyer Long, the recently retired executive editor of *Illinois Issues* magazine, have updated the book to include the newest administrations.

Today, perhaps more than ever, we face questions about the abilities and ethics of our elected officials. We have no crystal balls to guide us. Instead, our state offers lessons from a rich and colorful history punctuated by the life stories of the mostly good and competent governors of Illinois.

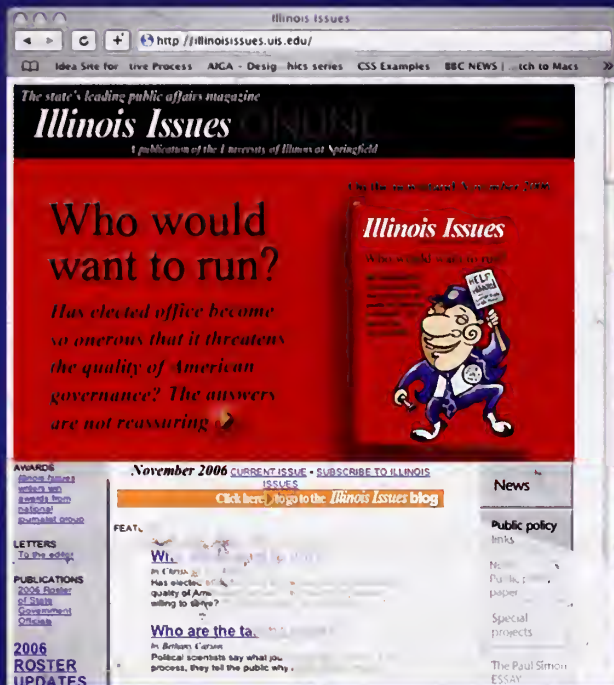
\$34⁹⁵

plus postage and handling

(\$4.00 first book, \$1.00 for each additional book)

To order call 217-206-6502

Illinois Issues ONLINE



Find up-to-date insight into state politics and the actions of state lawmakers, as well as links to in-depth background on public policy issues. We keep track of major breaking state news, too. Want to know what's happening between issues of the magazine? This is the place.

Connect to *Illinois Issues* Web site at
<http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

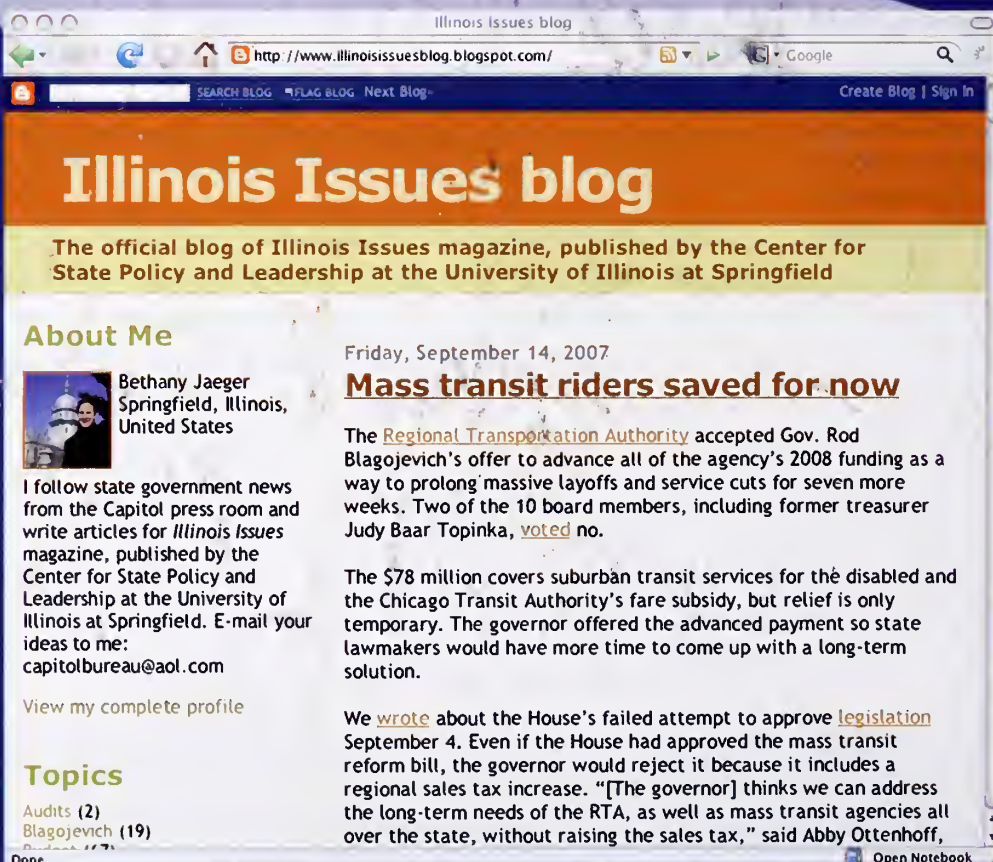
and
the "award winning" *Illinois Issues* blog at
<http://illinoisissuesblog.blogspot.com/>



blog

Top prize winner at
Capitolbeat's 2007 conference!

The National Association of Capitol Reporters and Editors, Capitolbeat, awarded *Illinois Issues'* blog its top prize in online beat reporting for coverage of the spring legislative session. The blog, created by Bethany Jaeger and our then-Public Affairs Reporting intern Deanese Williams-Harris, was updated several times a day as the session ground its way into serious overtime.



Find it at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>